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ABSTRACT

Survey data from 2200 young men, collected primarily during summer, 1970, is presented and analyzed. Issues under consideration include: (1) Vietnam; (2) National Unity; (3) Racial Tensions; (4) Crime, Violence, and Public Order; (5) Pollution; (6) Population Growth; (7) the Economy; (8) the Threat of Nuclear War; and (9) what young men feel they can do. A summary of major findings indicates that (1) Vietnam is considered, by young people, to be the number-one United States problem; (2) there is increasing mistrust and cynicism about government; (3) young people overwhelmingly support the 18 year old vote; (4) race is still a problem, but further government intervention is not the solution; (5) many young men favor firmer police and court action against crime and violence; (6) pollution, too, should be dealt with by stronger laws, rigid enforcement, and stringent penalties; and (7) contraception is the answer to overpopulation, though young peoples' knowledge about contraception is rather limited. Several conclusions are drawn, one of which is that much work is needed to educate young people for responsible citizenship. (TL)

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YOUTH LOOK AT NATIONAL PROBLEMS

A Special Report from

the Youth in Transition Project

JERALD G. BACHMAN

ELIZABETH VAN DUINEN

SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER

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PREFACE

This special repoft looks at how young men view national problems. It has evolved from a large research study--the Youth in Transition project--the primary purpose of which was stated several years ago in the following terms:

> Our study of Youth in Transition is focused on some major changes in adolescent boys during the high school years. It is particularly concerned with the way these changes are affected by aspects of the immediate social environment. These environmental characteristics include ability requirements, opportunities for achievement and affiliation, peer group structure, and availability of adult models (Bachman, et al., 1967, p. 1).

When the project began in 1965, we did not give much consideration to national events and problems as a part of the "immediate social environment" of high school boys. Our shortsightedness in this respect was evident in the first data collected; when asked to mention "some things you're not too happy about these days," 10 percent of our sample of tenth-grade boys mentioned the draft and/or the war in Vietnam. When we questioned the boys again near the end of eleventh grade, those personally unhappy about the draft and/or the war had increased to 19 percent, and 38 percent mentioned the draft and war in response to a more general question about "problems young men worry about most."

The third data collection--when most of the boys were about to graduate from high school--included a brand-new section on attitudes about the draft and military service; a part of that section was a series of questions about the war in Vietnam. The fourth and final data collection (one year later) repeated many questions about the draft, military service, and the war; in addition, it included a new interview segment which asked young men to state their views on other important problems facing the nation and what should be done about them.

The responses to some of these questions, especially those dealing with perceptions of national problems, are sufficiently interesting and timely that we felt we should make them available in this special report. It is always difficult to decide how soon to publish new data; the more thorough a job of analysis one does, the greater the danger that the findings will be out-of-date by the time they are reported. In this case, we have decided to present the findings now, before they grow stale, even though that limits us to primarily descriptive data rather than extensive analyses of more complex relationships. (We hope to present the latter sort of analyses in subsequent publications.)

Sample and Study Design

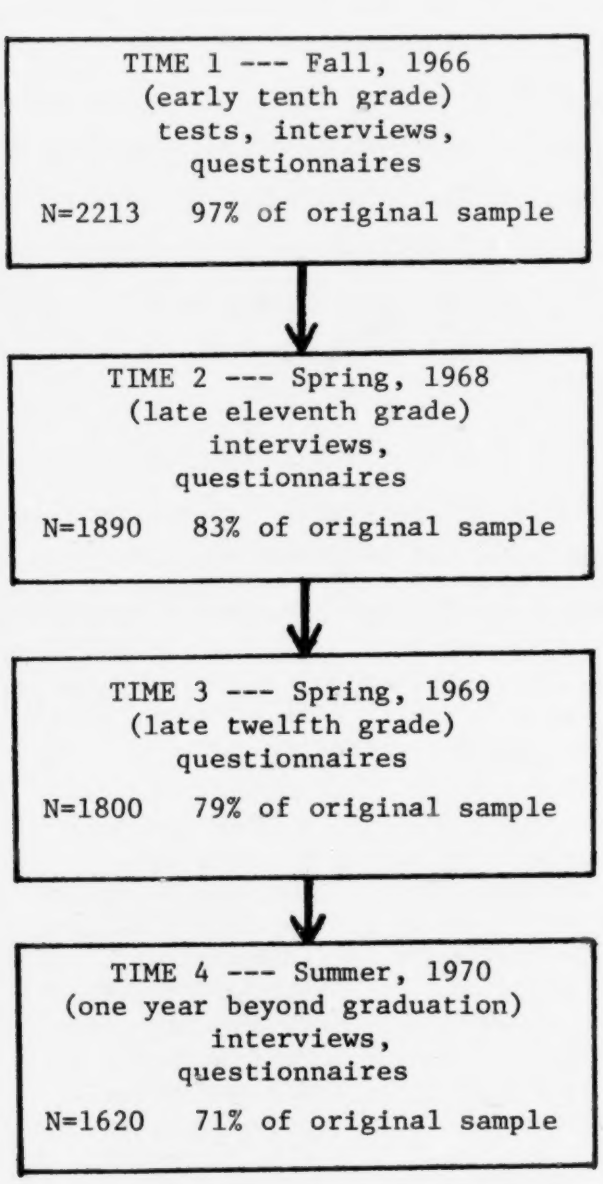
The Youth in Transition project has been studying a national sample of about 2200 young men to determine their attitudes, plans, and behaviors, particularly those relating to educational and occupational aspirations. Figure 1 presents a diagram of the study design. Our data collections,

using personal interviews and written questionnaires, spanned a period of nearly four years. The first data collection (fall 1966) was made when the boys were in tenth grade at 87 public high schools throughout the United States. The second (spring 1968) occurred when the majority of boys were finishing the eleventh grade. The third data collection (spring 1969) took place just before those boys still in school had graduated. In June and July of 1970 data were collected for the last time. At this point most of the boys had been out of high school for about a year. Some were in the military, others in the work force, and a large number were in college. Our retention rate through all four data collections is 73 percent of those who started the study--quite high for a project stretching over nearly four years.*

*For detailed descriptions of study design, sampling, and response rates, see the first two volumes in the Youth in Transition monograph series (Bachman, et al., 1967; Bachman, 1970). Additional monographs on the following topics will be issued in 1971 and early 1972: dropouts, the school as an organization, military plans and attitudes, drug usage and attitudes, transition through high school, and vocational education.

Figure 1

THE YOUTH IN TRANSITION STUDY
Overview of Research Design



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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEMS FACING THE NATION

Young men in the United States live and work in a variety of environments. They come from different family backgrounds, school environments, and work roles. But they share a common national environment and a common exposure to mass media which daily remind them that this nation is going through a period of upheaval--a time of stress and change.

This report is concerned with how young men view the major problems facing the nation. We will ask what problems they consider to be most important, what they think should be done, and what they themselves might do to help.

Our information comes primarily from a longitudinal study called *Youth in Transition;* this study has collected interview and questionnaire data from a nationwide sample of more than two thousand young men, beginning in fall 1966 when they entered tenth grade, and continuing for nearly four years. The present report concentrates on the final data collection, which surveyed our sample of young men after they were out of high school and into the several worlds of higher education, jobs, and military service.*

*The Preface includes a discussion of the Youth in Transition sample and the sequence of data collections.

The final data collection occurred in June and July of 1970. The timing is important, as we shall see, because the interviewing occurred shortly after two events of great national importance--the entrance of United States troops into Cambodia, and the events at Kent State University including student demonstrations against the war and the death of four students during those demonstrations.

Early in the 1970 interview the young men in our sample were asked the series of questions summarized in Figure 1-1. The question sequence began by giving a respondent an "open-ended" chance to list up to three national problems, without any suggestions provided by the interviewer. After a respondent listed these several problems of interest to him, he was asked to comment on the six specific problem areas shown in the lower part of Figure 1-1. Often one or more of these problem areas overlapped the ones named in the open-ended question, but we considered it important to have everyone comment on these six in spite of any such overlap. After a respondent rated the six topic areas in terms of importance and suggested solutions to the problem, an additional question (not shown in Figure 1-1) asked him to make the same suggestions for any other problems mentioned in the earlier open-ended question. Thus if a young man mentioned the war in Vietnam as an important problem facing the nation, he was asked what should be done about it--by government, schools, or anyone else.

Figure 1-2 summarizes responses to the initial open-ended question, "What are the most important problems facing the nation?" Vietnam (and Southeast Asia generally)

Figure 1-1

INTERVIEW SEGMENT ON NATIONAL PROBLEMS

Now we have some questions about problems facing the nation.

C6. First of all, what do you think are the most important problems facing this country today?
(LIST UP TO THREE MENTIONS, BUT DO NOT PROBE IF R GIVES FEWER)*

FIRST _____

SECOND _____

THIRD _____

C7-C12. (SHOW R CARD C7-C12) Here is a list of problems that are often mentioned. I'd like to ask you a few questions about them:

	a. How important do you think this problem is?	b. Do you have any ideas as to what should be done about this problem -- by government, schools, or anyone else?
C7. Chance of nuclear war	( ) 1 EXTREMELY ( ) 2 VERY ( ) 3 QUITE ( ) 4 SLIGHTLY ( ) 5 NOT AT ALL	
C8. Population growth	( ) 1 EXTREMELY ( ) 2 VERY ( ) 3 QUITE ( ) 4 SLIGHTLY ( ) 5 NOT AT ALL	
C9. Crime and violence	( ) 1 EXTREMELY ( ) 2 VERY ( ) 3 QUITE ( ) 4 SLIGHTLY ( ) 5 NOT AT ALL	
C10. Pollution	( ) 1 EXTREMELY ( ) 2 VERY ( ) 3 QUITE ( ) 4 SLIGHTLY ( ) 5 NOT AT ALL	
C11. Race relations	( ) 1 EXTREMELY ( ) 2 VERY ( ) 3 QUITE ( ) 4 SLIGHTLY ( ) 5 NOT AT ALL	
C12. Hunger and poverty	( ) 1 EXTREMELY ( ) 2 VERY ( ) 3 QUITE ( ) 4 SLIGHTLY ( ) 5 NOT AT ALL	

*Parentheses indicate instructions to interviewers.

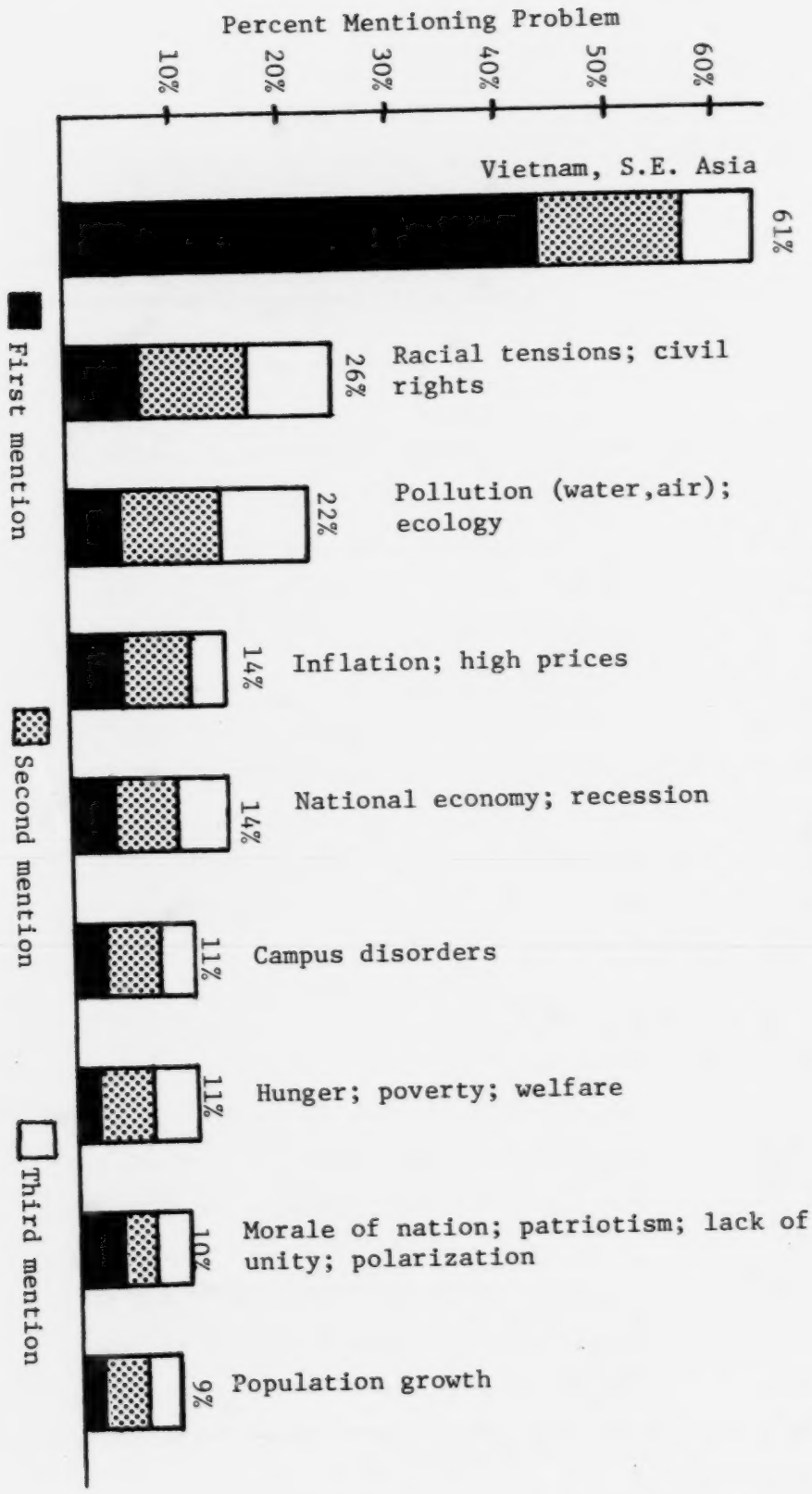


Figure 1-2
PROBLEMS FACING THE NATION

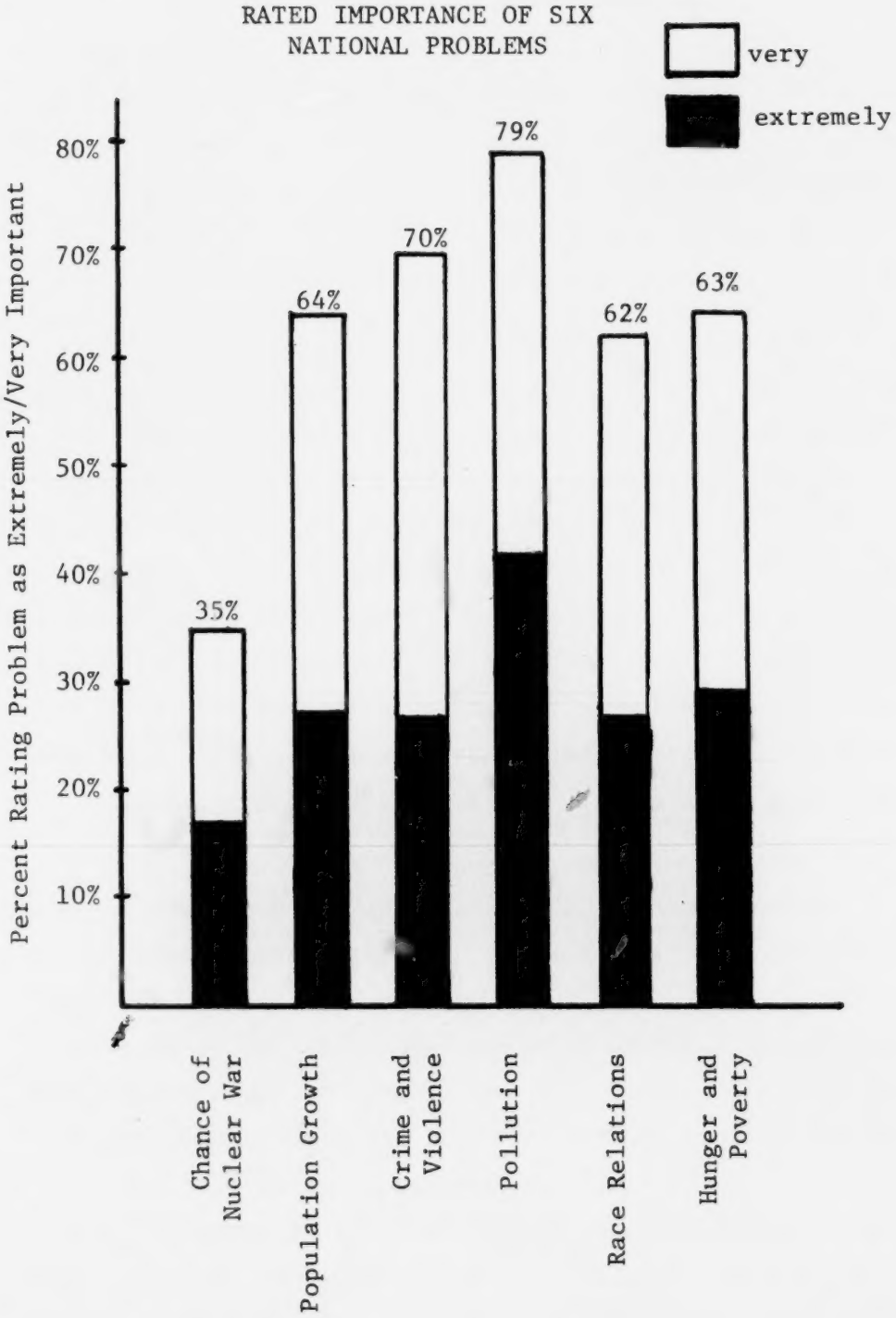
was the overwhelming first choice as a national problem; a total of 61 percent mentioned this issue; and 44 percent mentioned it first. Racial tensions were mentioned next most frequently (26 percent) followed by pollution (22 percent). The remaining issues most frequently mentioned were inflation, recession, campus disorders, hunger and poverty, national unity, and population growth.

The major problems mentioned by our sample of young men, mostly one year out of high school, correspond quite closely to those mentioned by high school seniors in Ohio. In a questionnaire study conducted in May 1970, a sample of Ohio seniors was asked "What do you think are the most important problems facing the American society and our country today?" Vietnam and Cambodia were mentioned by 61 percent, racial problems by 29 percent, and pollution by 29 percent (Bryant, 1970). Given the differences in samples and methodology (questionnaire versus interview), the similarities between the two studies are rather striking.

After answering the initial open-ended question about problems facing the nation, our respondents were asked to respond specifically to six problems, first rating their importance and then offering suggestions as to what could be done about them. The importance ratings are presented in Figure 1-3. Pollution heads the list in importance, with 42 percent rating it "extremely important" and an additional 37 percent rating it "very important." Four other issues, population growth, crime and violence, race relations, and hunger and poverty, are about equal in rated importance.

Figure 1-3

RATED IMPORTANCE OF SIX NATIONAL PROBLEMS



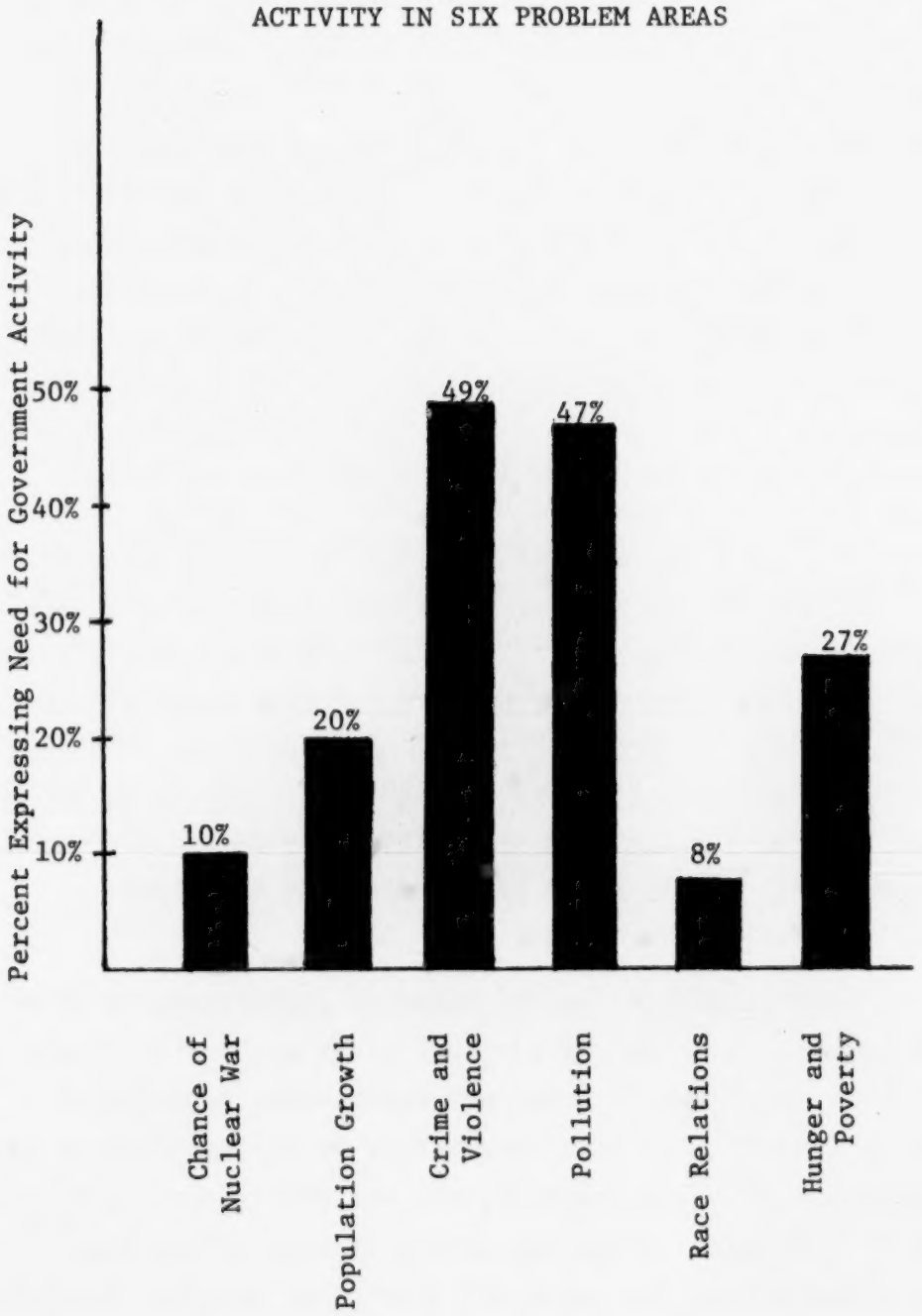
It is of some interest to note that this generation raised in the "atomic era" did *not* give such high importance ratings to the chance of nuclear war; 17 percent rated the problem as "extremely" important and another 18 percent as "very" important. As we shall note in Chapter 8, many young men seemed to feel that a nuclear stalemate has been reached and that "no one is stupid enough to kill everyone." The contrast between this low rated concern over nuclear war and the high degree of concern and dissatisfaction with the Vietnam war is perhaps a useful reminder that nuclear war is a general and diffuse danger to everyone, whereas the war in Vietnam represents a specific and acute danger to nineteen-year-old males.

Another interesting contrast lies between the high importance ratings given to crime and violence, and the fact that this area was seldom volunteered in response to the open-ended question about major national problems. The ratings, no doubt, reflect an awareness of the seriousness of crime and violence, but the fact that young men do not spontaneously single out this area suggests that, for them, "law and order" is by no means the number-one-problem facing the nation.

After each problem was rated in importance, we asked this question: "Do you have any ideas as to what should be done about this problem--by government, schools, or anyone else?" Specific suggestions about these issues are discussed in later chapters, but one more general dimension is of interest. A special coding of each answer dealt with recommendations for increased government action. Respondents were not asked directly whether government should do more

Figure 1-4

NEED FOR MORE GOVERNMENT
ACTIVITY IN SIX PROBLEM AREAS



to solve each problem, but the question gave ample opportunity to volunteer such a view. A good many respondents did state clearly that more government action of some sort is needed; the frequency of such responses differs sharply from one issue to another, as Figure 1-4 indicates. Crime and violence along with pollution are in the forefront, with almost half of the respondents indicating a need for greater government activity to deal with these problems. When we deal with these issues more extensively in chapters to follow, we will note that much of the proposed government action in these areas involves tougher laws and stricter enforcement.

In the chapters which follow we will take up each of the major national problems in turn, looking at suggestions as to "what should be done about this problem--by government, schools, or anyone else." Whenever possible we will bring in other data from the Youth in Transition study and other relevant studies that bear on the problem areas. We turn first to the problem which loomed largest in the minds of young men in mid-1970 -- the war in Vietnam.

CHAPTER 2

VIETNAM*

The young men in our study have shown an increasing concern about the war in Vietnam over the last four years. When we first asked the tenth-grade boys in our study back in 1966 "What are some things you're not too happy about these days?" and "Can you tell me some of the problems young men your age worry about most?" only 10 percent mentioned that they personally were worried about Vietnam. Almost four years later the figure had more than tripled. Similarly, in 1966 only 7 percent of the boys mentioned Vietnam as one of the problems their age group worried about; in 1970, 75 percent said it was a source of worry.
Figure 2-1 presents the percentages mentioning Vietnam, the draft, and being sent to Vietnam in response to these two questions.

When we noticed that concern about Vietnam was growing as our second interview data became available, we decided to explore this issue more explicitly. A "Vietnam War Dissent Index" consisting of the six questions shown in Table 2-1 was used in the next interviews (spring 1969 and spring 1970). Johnston and Bachman (1970, pp. 6-8) summarized the scale as follows:

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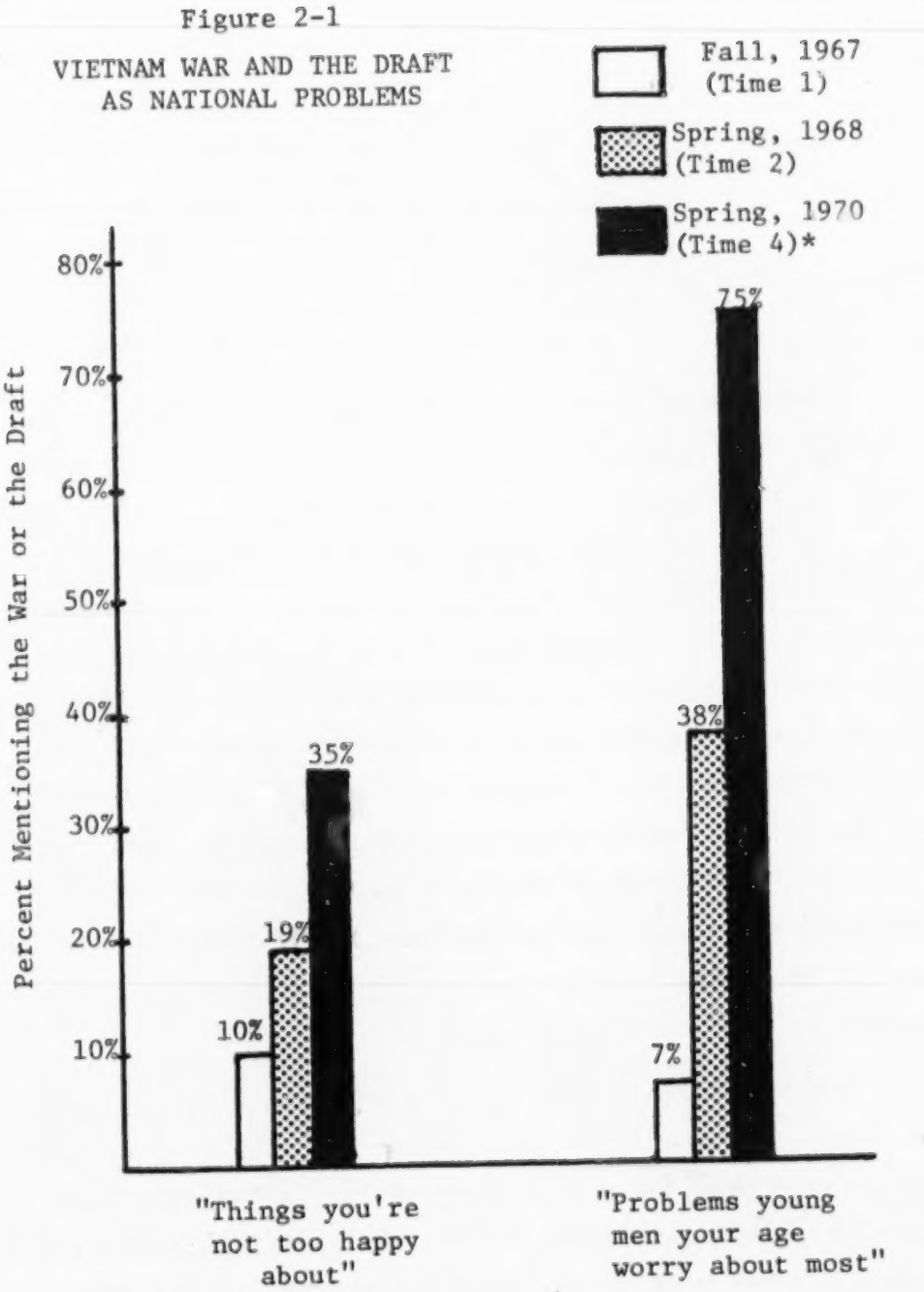
*The data and interpretation presented in this chapter draw heavily on the work of Johnston (1970) and Johnston and Bachman (1970).

Figure 2-1

VIETNAM WAR AND THE DRAFT
AS NATIONAL PROBLEMS



*This interview question could not be included at Time 3, since that data collection was limited to paper-and-pencil questionnaires.

> A deliberate effort was made to provide a 'balanced' scale; thus there are three anti-Vietnam War items (a, b, and d) and three items that might be termed 'pro-Vietnam War' (c, e, and f)....A summary score of the six items was calculated for each respondent by reversing the scale for items a, b, and d and then taking the mean of the responses over all six items. The resulting score--called the 'Vietnam War Dissent Index'--was used to classify the respondents according to their views toward the Vietnam War....Values on the index range continuously from one to four.

A low index score indicates support for U. S. activities in Vietnam, whereas a high score indicates disagreement with those activities.

Figure 2-2 presents distribution of this "Vietnam Dissent Index" across our last two data collections. In the spring of 1969 there seemed to be more support for the war than dissent against it, although a large group was centered in the neutral category. Clearly, attitudes had changed substantially by spring 1970 as more young men moved to the "dissenter" side of the scale. Respondents with scores of 2.75 and up jumped from 20 percent to 32 percent. On the other hand, the 40 percent of our sample who seemed to be supporting the Vietnam effort dropped to 35 percent.

An examination of the individual items shown in Table 2-1 indicates that the increase in dissent is spread fairly evenly across most of the questions in the index. For five out of the six items, the increase in dissenting responses is between 7 and 12 percent. The one item which did not change is, "Fighting the war in Vietnam is bringing us closer to world war";65 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement in 1969 and again in 1970.

TABLE 2-1

VIETNAM DISSENT INDEX ITEMS

"Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?"

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Missing data
a. Fighting the war in Vietnam is damaging to our national honor or pride.	*10*	*37*	*43*	*8*	*2*
	17	37	36	8	2
b. Fighting the war in Vietnam is really not in the national interest.	*9*	*35*	*46*	*8*	*2*
	18	34	37	10	1
c. Fighting the war in Vietnam is important to fight the spread of Communism.	*20*	*54*	*21*	*4*	*2*
	21	45	25	8	1
d. Fighting the war in Vietnam is bringing us closer to world war.	*14*	*51*	*31*	*2*	*2*
	14	51	30	3	2
e. Fighting the war in Vietnam is important to protect friendly countries.	*12*	*55*	*27*	*3*	*3*
	10	48	34	7	2
f. Fighting the war in Vietnam is important to show other nations that we keep our promises	*14*	*53*	*26*	*6*	*2*
	11	43	34	10	2

Cases per time:
1969 *(Time 3) N = 1799*
1970 (Time 4) N = 1620

Figure 2-2

DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES ON THE
VIETNAM DISSENT INDEX

The Vietnam Dissent Index was examined separately for those who dropped out of high school, those who ended their education with high school graduation, and those who continued into post-high school education. Figure 2-3 presents the 1969 and 1970 dissent scores for each of these groups.

The results are consistent with the widely-shared impression that college students are particularly dissatisfied with the war; moreover, the findings indicate that disenchantment with the war showed an appreciable increase during the first year of college.

Dissent over Vietnam was virtually unchanged between 1969 and 1970 among those who graduated from high school but did not go on to college. Some increase in dissent occurred among dropouts, but it was much smaller than that for the college students (and dropouts account for a much smaller proportion of our respondents). We conclude, then, that the overall increase in dissatisfaction with U. S. policy in Vietnam is due largely to changes in attitudes that occurred during the first year of college.

In 1970, in addition to repeating the Vietnam Dissent questions, we included another item which would allow us to compare the views of young men with those of adults. The question shown at the top of Table 2-2 is a direct copy of a Gallup Poll item used in December 1969 and March and May of 1970. The four options represent a range of suggested solutions to the Vietnam war. Plan A calls for immediate and total withdrawal; Plan B is essentially the Hatfield-McGovern amendment which calls for withdrawal within eighteen months; Plan C might be called "extended

Figure 2-3

VIETNAM DISSENT RELATED TO
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

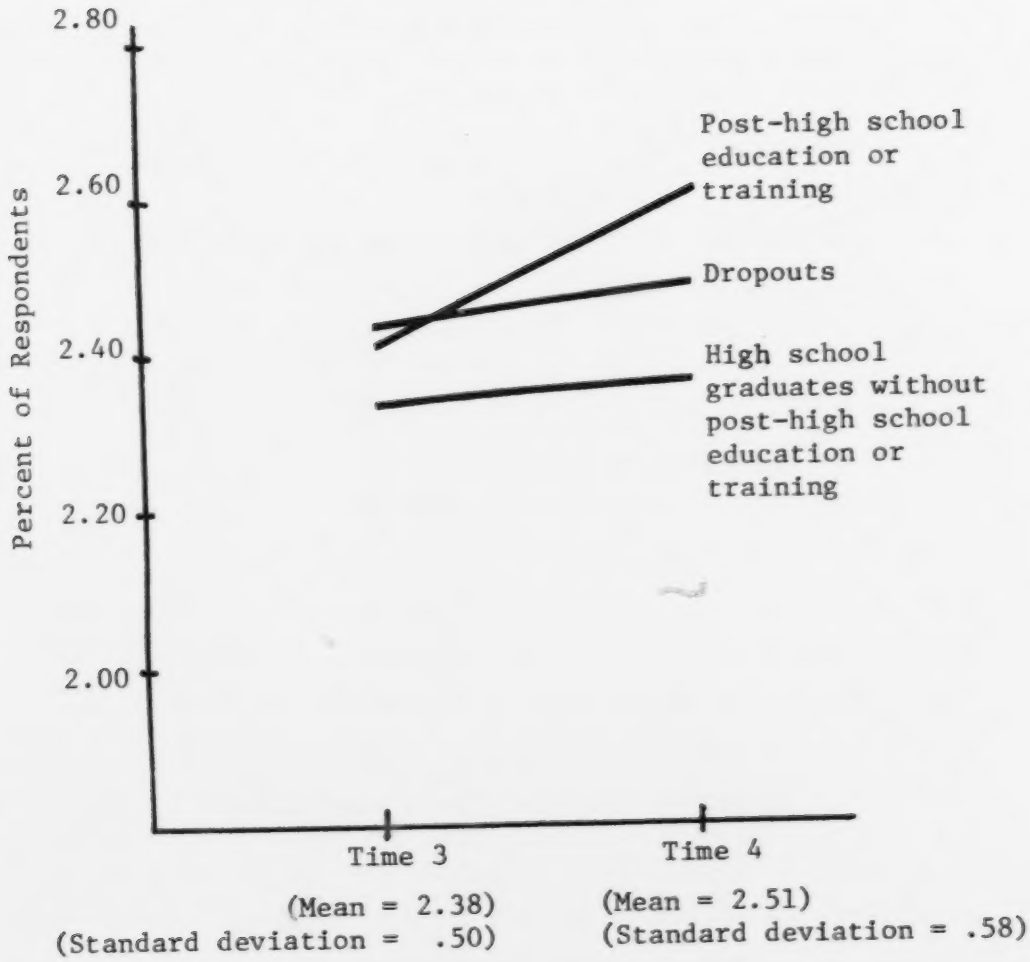


TABLE 2-2

FOUR PLANS QUESTION

"Now I would like to ask you some questions about Vietnam. Here are four different plans the United States could follow in dealing with the war in Vietnam. Which one do you prefer?"

PLAN A: Withdraw all troops from Vietnam immediately.

PLAN B: Withdraw all troops by end of 18 months.

PLAN C: Withdraw troops but take as many years to do this as are needed to turn the war over to the South Vietnamese.

PLAN D: Send more troops to Vietnam and step up the fighting.

PLAN	Adult men (Gallup Poll)			Youth in Transition	Male Ohio high school students (Bryant, 1970, p. 27)
	December 1969	March 1970	May 1970	June-July 1970	May 1970
A	16	17	21	25	17
B	17	23	26	34	29
C	45	42	32	27	36
D	14	10	14	12	18
No Opinion	8	8	7	3	-

Vietnamization" of the war; Plan D pushes for military victory. The Gallup Poll percentages are shown alongside the Youth in Transition data. It can be seen that although young men are more "dovish" than adults, particularly adult men, the differences are still not great. This is reinforced by the data for Plan D, which indicates that adults and young men do not differ significantly in the percentage who prefer a military victory in Vietnam. The young men show a good deal of interest in speedy withdrawal--Plan B is considered favorable by more young men than adults, and the opposite is true of Plan C.

The Gallup question was also asked of Ohio school students in June of 1970 (Bryant, 1970, p. 27). Among the 551 males in the sample the responses were distributed as follows: 17 percent favored Plan A, 29 percent favored Plan B, 36 percent favored Plan C, and 18 percent favored Plan D. Incidentally, the females in the Ohio sample, like those in Gallup's nationwide samples of adults were noticeably more "dovish" than the males. How can we account for the differences between our sample and the Ohio high school seniors? First there is the obvious possibility that young people are a bit more "hawkish" in Ohio than in the nation as a whole. But another important part of the explanation is that the Youth in Transition sample in 1970 was one year beyond high school, and nearly half of these young men spent the year in college where their attitudes on the war underwent considerable change.

A Purdue Opinion Poll (Erlick, 1970) conducted with a nationwide sample of high school students in April 1970, asked the following question: "Do you think the U. S. is

bringing the troops home from Vietnam too soon?" Among twelfth graders (boys and girls combined) the responses were: 6 percent "definitely yes"; 10 percent "undecided, probably yes"; 18 percent "undecided, probably no"; 60 percent "definitely no" (about 6 percent of the cases were missing data). Separate breakdowns between girls and boys were not available for twelfth graders; however, across grades ten through twelve combined there were male-female differences in the same sort of direction as noted in the Ohio and Gallup data--more girls than boys felt that the troops were definitely *not* coming home too soon. The Purdue question is not directly comparable to the Gallup item used in both the Ohio study and the last Youth in Transition interview; nevertheless, it does add to the weight of evidence that most young people are eager for disengagement from Vietnam.

The above questionnaire items all required the respondent to choose from a limited set of alternatives. What sort of solutions to Vietnam are offered to an open-ended interview question? It will be remembered that 61 percent of our respondents listed Vietnam as one of the most important problems facing the nation in our 1970 interview questions on national problems. We also asked each respondent to suggest solutions for problems he nominated as important. (These open-ended questions were presented early in the interview, far ahead of the more specific Vietnam questions discussed above.) Table 2-3 presents the solutions given by those who mentioned Vietnam as a national problem. The highest percentage fall in the category, "Get out now, immediately," followed by "Withdrawal as soon as possible within specified time limits

TABLE 2-3

SOLUTIONS SUGGESTED TO THE VIETNAM WAR
BY THE 61 PERCENT WHO FELT
IT IS A MAJOR NATIONAL PROBLEM

Solutions	Percentage*
Get out now, immediately	10
Withdraw as soon as possible, including within specified time limits	9
Pro-Nixon, Vietnamization, gradual withdrawal	7
Win the war or get out	7
Win, bomb, send more troops	8
Negotiations	3
Other specific suggestions	2
Vague answers, "end it," no solutions	11
Don't know, approximately	4

*First mentioned solutions across all mentions of Vietnam as a major national problem.

such as eighteen months." The following categories received about equal numbers of responses: "Pro-Nixon plan, strengthening Vietnamese troops, gradual withdrawal"; "Win the war or get out"; and "Fight harder, send more troops, win."

The "Win the war or get out" category is not really a suggested solution but rather appears to be an expression of war-weariness. The code category, "Vague, 'end the war'

no suggestion on how to do so," also captures such a feeling. These responses convey more feelings of frustration and exhaustion with the war than dominant moral positions or political solutions.

The interview findings summarized above are consistent with the data presented earlier in this chapter; together they indicate a great deal of disillusionment and weariness with the war. This dissatisfaction applies to adults as well as young men, in the view of Converse and Schuman; the majority of Americans feel that "we have not won and have little prospect of doing so" (1970, p. 24). This rather pragmatic assessment that the war has been a bad investment probably accounts for much of the increased desire for rapid disengagement.

The urge toward disengagement was somewhat stronger among young men in 1970 than among cross-sections of adult males. And dissent is particularly strong among those on campuses. Nevertheless, the similarities are more striking than the differences. Most young men, like the nation as a whole, are increasingly impatient with the war and eager for withdrawal from Southeast Asia.

CHAPTER 3

NATIONAL UNITY

Unlike some issues which are easily discussed and categorized, the problem of national unity is an "umbrella" problem encompassing many other issues including campus disturbances, the generation gap, minority group tension, poverty, and Vietnam. Ten percent of our sample specifically mentioned such things as "the morale of the nation," "the lack of patriotism," "growing polarizations," "apathy," and "the lack of unity" as major national problems. These responses suggest a fear that the nation is drifting, without a clear sense of shared goals and purposes. America, they seem to say, is failing to hold us together, to fulfill its promise as the "melting pot" of ideas and groups.

Besides the ten percent specifically concerned about national unity, a number of other respondents mentioned related problems. Four percent considered the government's quality, its lack of responsiveness to the average citizen, and the need for a more democratic government as major national problems. Three percent mentioned "our national leadership" as a problem. In all, 21 percent of our respondents mentioned problems dealing with the nation, government, politics, and national leadership. Clearly the direction of this country is of considerable concern to young men, as it is to many adults.

As with the other problems our respondents were concerned about, we asked for their solutions. A little less than half of those mentioning problems of national unity and government said they did not know what might solve these problems. The largest number of solutions offered were vague statements about "getting together," and "all sides have to listen to one another." A sampling of suggested solutions indicates their wide range and diversity:

> Get rid of all the corrupt and crooked politicians and put better, younger ones in.
>
> Don't keep pushing your ideas on everybody.
>
> The individual citizen must be made to feel a part of where he works and of this country and its government.
>
> The government should listen more to the wants of the people.
>
> Education, creating awareness.
>
> Listen to dissenters. Stop those that break the law.
>
> I don't know. It has to do with dealing with the forces which caused polarization in the first place--Vietnam, selective service, racism.
>
> Stop the war.
>
> We must become more involved; we must attempt to find out who we are electing and not be so impressed by looks.
>
> Lower the voting age.
>
> Set a limit on campaign spending, make voting by congressmen mandatory.
>
> Eliminate the electoral college system. Select delegates uniformly and democratically.
>
> Make the present party system more grass-roots; cut back on political machinery.

What other evidence do we have regarding this concern of young men about government, political divisions, and

politiçal leadership? At all four data collections we asked a series of questionnaire items about political attitudes. The first of these questions asked about interest in government and current events. At Time 1--10th grade for our respondents--only about 40 percent of the sample took a "very great" or "a lot of interest" in government and current events. By Time 4--one year out of high school for most respondents--56 percent did so. Correspondingly, the number expressing little or no interest in current affairs decreased with time.

Table 3-1 presents questions dealing directly with political attitudes, particularly trust in government. All six items show increasing cynicism from 1966 to 1970. Note that the number of those who feel the government "pays very much attention to what people think" decreases by almost a third from 10th grade, 1966, to one year out of high school, 1970. During the same period twice as many come to feel that the government pays little attention to what people think. By the time most of these young men are one year out of high school, over 30 percent feel that most or quite a few people running the government are crooked or dishonest; and the number who feel that hardly any are crooked or dishonest has dropped by half. This pattern is consistent throughout these items. It is interesting that the most noticeable shifts occur from 1969 to 1970. Perhaps the experiences of college, work, and the military have created a cynicism, or realism, which has rejected a more trusting view of politics and government.

Our findings of dissatisfaction with government are corroborated by findings from other studies. Thirty-nine

TABLE 3-1

POLITICAL ATTITUDES

	Percentages			
	1966	1968	1969	1970
"Over the years, how much attention do you feel the government pays to what the people think when deciding what to do?"				
It pays very much attention to what people think.	16	12	10	6
It pays a lot of attention....	36	35	37	26
It pays some attention.....	35	41	39	45
It pays a little attention....	10	11	13	20
It pays no attention to what people think.	1	1	1	2
Missing data	2	1	-	1
"Do you think some of the people running the government are crooked or dishonest?"				
Most of them are crooked or dishonest.	5	3	5	6
Quite a few are.	18	18	22	26
Some are.	48	53	55	56
Hardly any are.	25	23	16	11
None at all are crooked or dishonest.	4	2	1	1
Missing data	2	1	1	1
"Would you say the government is pretty much run for a few big interests looking out for themselves, or is it run for the benefit of all the people?"				
Nearly always run for a few big interests.	9	6	5	7
Usually run for a few big interests.	20	15	16	22
Run some for the big interests, some for the people.	27	34	38	43
Usually run for the benefit of all the people.	29	33	32	23
Nearly always for the benefit of all the people.	13	11	8	5
Missing data	2	1	1	1

TABLE 3-1
(continued)

POLITICAL ATTITUDES

	Percentages			
	1966	1968	1969	1970
*"Do you think the government wastes much of the money we pay in taxes?"				
Nearly all tax money is wasted.	5	4	4	5
A lot of tax money is wasted.	25	34	42	51
Some tax money is wasted.	40	43	39	35
A little tax money is wasted.	23	17	13	7
No tax money is wasted.	5	3	2	1
Missing data	2	1	1	1
*"How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?"				
Almost always.	28	19	18	11
Often.	44	47	48	42
Sometimes.	23	29	28	37
Seldom.	3	4	5	7
Never.	1	-	1	1
Missing data	2	1	-	1
*"Do you feel that the people running the government are smart people who usually know what they are doing?"				
They almost always know what they are doing.	30	22	22	13
They usually know what they are doing.	48	56	57	53
They sometimes know what they are doing.	17	19	17	28
They seldom know what they are doing.	3	3	3	4
They never know what they are doing.	1	1	1	1
Missing data	2	1	-	1

*These three items compose the index, "Trust in Government."

percent of Ohio high school students agree that the government does a "bad job" of representing the views and desires of the people. Even more striking are the responses to this statement, "The form of government in this country needs no major changes." Forty-eight percent disagreed, whereas only 31 percent agreed (Bryant, 1970). The Harris poll in *Life* (1971) found similar results to the question, "How much confidence do you have in the government to solve the problems of the 70's?" Twenty-two percent said "hardly any"; 54 percent said "some but not a lot"; and only 20 percent said "a great deal." Similar results were found in the Purdue study of high school students. Forty-eight percent of the sample of twelfth-graders felt that "There are serious flaws in our society today, but the system is flexible enough to solve them"; the remainder were divided equally between complete endorsement of the present American way of life, calls for radical change, and undecided (Erlick, 1970).

What interpretation can we give to this growing dissatisfaction with government among young people? Is it, as one common explanation has it, that there is a "generation gap" between youth and their elders these days, with young people moving away from values and attitudes of adults? Or do young people simply start out overly idealistic and gradually become more realistic or more cynical during the high school years? Still another explanation of this phenomenon is that the whole country, young people and adults alike, has become increasingly dissatisfied during the last few years.

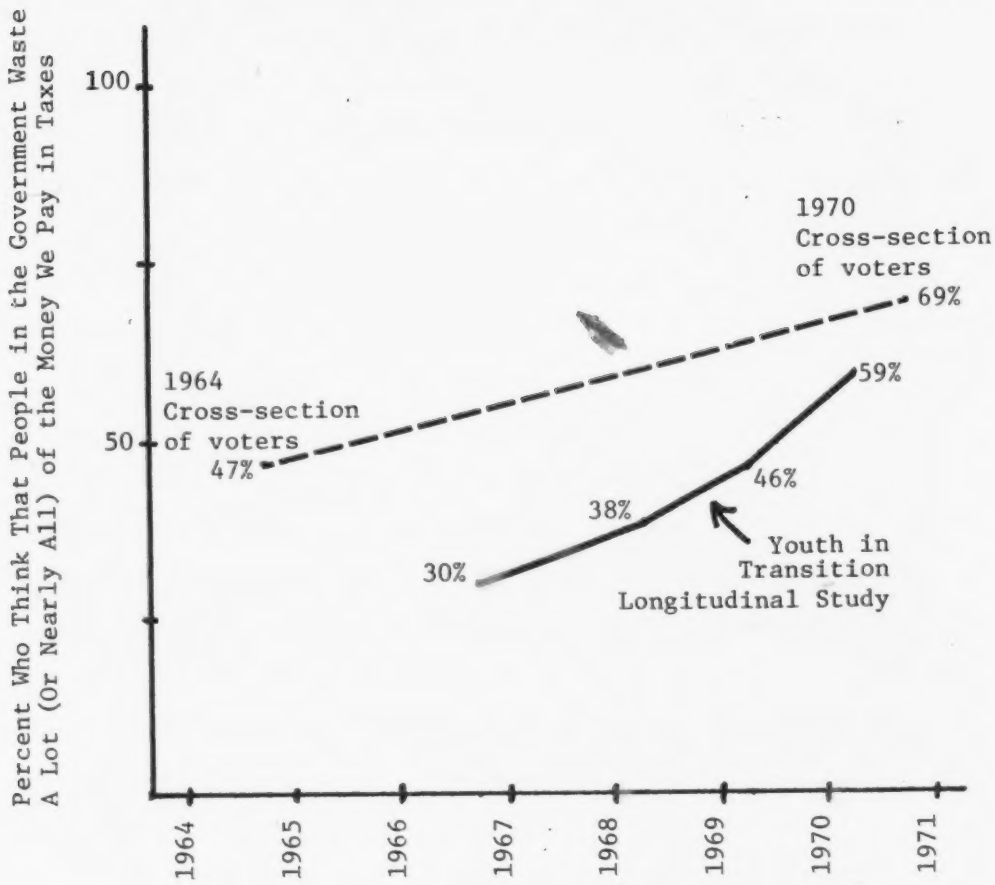
In order to distinguish between these several explanations, we need to know how adults feel about

government now, and how they felt about it a few years ago. Fortunately, data of this sort are available from voter studies conducted by the Political Behavior Program in the Institute for Social Research; indeed, many of the interview and questionnaire items already discussed in this chapter were originally developed in that program. One such question deals with waste in government; a comparison of youth and adult attitudes is presented in Figure 3-1. Two things are important to note from the figure. First, substantially more adults in 1970 than in 1964 feel that government wastes a lot of tax money; the increase of 22 percent is similar to the 29 percent increase in such responses among young men. Second, the adults start out and end up *more dissatisfied* along this dimension than the young men in our sample. We must, of course, be cautious about such conclusions, since there are important differences in methodology (for example, the voter studies asked the questions about government as part of an interview, whereas the Youth in Transition study presented these questions as part of the paper-and-pencil questionnaire). Nevertheless, the data in Figure 3-1 add a good deal to our ability to place youth attitudes in a larger context.

The increased perception of government waste is not an isolated case of growing dissatisfaction among adults. A number of other items in the voter studies show similar trends. When asked how often they could trust the government to do what is right, the proportion of voters who said "just about always" or "most of the time" dropped from 77 percent in 1964 to 54 percent in 1970; the proportion of Youth in Transition respondents who answered the same question "almost always" or "usually" dropped from 78 percent

Figure 3-1

WASTE IN GOVERNMENT:
PERCEPTIONS OF ADULTS AND YOUTH



in 1966 to 66 percent in 1970. A similar question asked, "Do you feel that almost all of the people running the government are smart people who usually know what they are doing, or do you think that quite a few of them don't seem to know what they are doing?" The adults answering "don't know what they are doing" increased from 27 percent in 1964 to 44 percent in 1970; the young men answering "seldom..." or "never know what they are doing" increased from 20 percent in 1966 to 32 percent in 1970.

In sum, we find that growing dissatisfaction is not the exclusive domain of young people; adults are experiencing a similar dissatisfaction. The whole country, youth and adults alike it seems, has become more impatient and disillusioned with its government during recent years.

Given this growing concern and dissatisfaction with government, is there evidence to support the widespread notion that young people are "dropping out" of society--that they want no part of the whole political process? One way of getting some perspective on this issue is to look at how young people recently felt about the question of the eighteen-year-old vote. In 1965, another nationwide study at the Institute for Social Research showed only about half of the male high school seniors supported the franchise for eighteen-year olds, and somewhat less than half of the females did (Beck and Jennings, 1969). In 1969, the senior year for most, we asked the young men in the Youth in Transition study the identically-worded question about whether eighteen-year olds should be allowed to vote; 80 percent said yes. (When the question was repeated in the 1970 data collection, the proportion in favor remained

about 80 percent.) It is worth noting that those who most vigorously objected to United States policy in Vietnam in 1969 were overwhelmingly (about 95 percent) in favor of the eighteen-year old vote. This overall increase in support for a lowered voting age is dramatic evidence that young people, far from dropping out of the political process, are eager for a larger role in it.

Now that the franchise in national elections has been extended to eighteen-year olds, how will they vote? Table 3-2, Part A presents the political preferences of our respondents in 1970. (Parallel data were obtained in the three earlier data collections, but no important differences appeared; apparently, the dissatisfaction with government discussed above did not lead to any massive shift in party preference.) Twenty-one percent of the boys in our study considered themselves Republicans while 32 percent preferred the Democrat party. The rest of the sample is distributed in miscellaneous categories, particularly the alternative "Haven't thought about it." The results from the *Life* (1971) poll and the Purdue study (Erlick, 1970), shown in Parts B and C of Table 3-2, show essentially the same pattern--more Democrats than Republicans, but still more who are undecided.

We said at the start of this chapter that the problem of national unity is a broad and somewhat amorphous one. In spite of the difficulty in defining and delineating it, we are led to conclude from the data presented here that unity is a major concern of young people. That youth have become increasingly dissatisfied with government in recent years comes as no surprise to those who have observed demonstrations

TABLE 3-2

POLITICAL PREFERENCES OF YOUTH IN NATIONWIDE POLLS

PART A: Youth in Transition -- Nineteen-year-old males in 1970

How would you describe your political preference?

Strongly Republican	5%	21%
Mildly Republican	16	
Mildly Democrat	21	32%
Strongly Democrat	11	
Neutral, votes for best man, independent, etc. (write-in)	14	
Other	6	
Haven't thought about it	20	
Missing data	7	

PART B: Purdue Opinion Panel -- High school seniors in 1970 (adapted from Erlick, 1970)

Suppose that the Presidential election were held today. Which party do you think could do a better job of handling the problems facing this country?

The Republican Party	14%
The Democratic Party	26
The American Independent Party	7
No difference between parties	18
Undecided	30
Missing data	5

PART C: Harris Survey for *Life* -- Youth aged 15 through 21 in late 1970

How do you intend to vote in the next election you are eligible to vote in?

Republican	18%
Democratic	35
Wallace	4
Other or not sure	40
Will refuse to vote	3

on and off campuses during the late 1960's. But we are not led to conclude that this is evidence of a generation gap, for adults are also increasingly dissatisfied with government. Perhaps the greater differences between youth and adults lie in their willingness (and opportunities) to engage in activist demonstrations of their dissatisfactions, thus providing the illusion of a larger gap between the generations than in fact exists.

It is hard to know how much of the disenchantment during the late 1960's can be traced directly to United States involvement in Vietnam. Other events, such as the assassination of three great leaders--John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Robert Kennedy--have surely left their mark. These recent experiences have been especially traumatic for young people, for they identified closely with the fallen leaders and youth are the ones who face the prospect of personal involvement in a mean and frustrating war. What is perhaps most striking is the fact that they are not *more* cynical and alienated. When their views are compared with those of adults, today's young people are not ready to give up on their country. They share with their elders an increasing impatience with government, but they have not dropped out. They want to have a part in shaping the nation's future--indeed, they may feel an increasingly desperate need to do so.

CHAPTER 4

RACIAL TENSIONS

Racial tensions were mentioned second most often among major national problems by the young men we questioned. In a later question asking how important this problem is, 62 percent answered "extremely" or "very" important. Nevertheless, race relations was one of the categories receiving the lowest percentage of solutions advocating more government activity.

What sort of solutions to this problem do young men give? Table 4-1 presents the most often mentioned responses to the question, "Do you have any ideas as to what should be done about this problem--by government, schools, or anyone else?" Nineteen percent could not think of a solution or had no opinion. Thirty-two percent mentioned solutions dependent on individual goodwill: "People need to understand each other better." "People should treat each other fairly," or alternatively, "should not be prejudiced." "People should get together and work things out." This corroborates our earlier observation that race relations is a problem few of our respondents feel requires more government activity. Evidently many young men feel that race relations is a problem which can not really be solved by legislation, but only by personal goodwill. Twelve percent mentioned that "People should be taught to be fair, to get

TABLE 4-1

SOLUTIONS TO RACE RELATIONS

Solutions	Percentage
Individual goodwill and understanding	32
People should be taught to not be prejudiced	12
Schools should teach better race relations	5
Government should enforce equal right, integration	4
Seek racial balance in the schools	4
Reduce or eliminate bussing	1
Leave the problem alone, it will get better if ignored	2
Response indicating negative attitude toward integration and/or racial minorities	5
Don't know, can't think of a solution	19

along better, to not discriminate," or "Education about other races is needed." Five percent mentioned the schools specifically as the agent to teach better race relations. Six percent of the sample gave solutions which reflected negative attitudes toward integration and/or racial minorities. These responses included, "Stop worrying about 'rights'," "Stop riots, burning, looting, etc.," and expressions of a separatist attitude, "Different races shouldn't live together."

These findings are corroborated by a number of other studies. Among Ohio high school students interviewed in June 1970, 90 percent agreed that racism is a problem in

this country. However, their proposed solutions were vague statements about "treating all men as equals." When asked specifically, only 29 percent favored bussing as a solution to racism (Bryant, 1970). A recent Harris poll of young people, ages 15 to 21, found 66 percent opposed to bussing. Yet 58 percent of these same respondents favored laws requiring the hiring of minorities (*Life*, 1971).

We specifically probed for racial attitudes in a questionnaire segment used in the 1969 and 1970 data collections. The results are presented in Table 4-2. There are relatively few marked changes in the responses to these items from spring 1969 to early summer 1970. The majority of our respondents agree that the government's role is to enforce equality, that they would not mind close contact with those of other races, and that Negroes do miss out on housing, schooling, and jobs because of discrimination. The Purdue study of high school students found 73 percent of their twelfth grade respondents (boys and girls combined) having no strong objections to working closely in school with a student of another race (Erlick, 1970). This corresponds closely to the 75 percent of our sample who said they "wouldn't mind at all" having a supervisor of a different race.

The questions in Table 4-2 have been condensed into three indexes, as indicated in the table. For example: responses to the first three items, dealing with the government's role in race relations, were appropriately combined to produce the index, Race: Strong Government Role. A high score on the index, Perceived Discrimination, indicates the respondent feels that Negroes miss out on

TABLE 4-2

RACIAL ATTITUDES

"Now we'd like to learn your opinions about the way people of different races get along in America, and how you would like things to be. Try to check the answers that tell how you really feel; if there is any question that you don't want to answer, just leave it blank."

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

STRONG GOVERNMENT ROLE

*"The government in Washington should see to it that White and Negro children are allowed to go to the same schools if they want to."

**

60	63	Agree.
27	28	Agree mostly.
7	6	Disagree mostly.
4	3	Disagree.
1	1	Missing data

*"The government in Washington should see to it that people are treated fairly and equally in jobs, no matter what their race may be."

62	70	Agree.
29	24	Agree mostly.
5	3	Disagree mostly.
2	1	Disagree.
1	1	Missing data

"It is not the government's business to pass laws about equal treatment for all races."

16	13	Agree.
18	15	Agree mostly.
26	26	Disagree mostly.
40	44	Disagree.
2	2	Missing data

SOCIAL DISTANCE

*"Suppose you had a job where your supervisor was a qualified person of a different race (White, Negro). Would you mind that a lot, a little, or not at all?"

6	5	I'd mind it a lot.
25	20	I'd mind it a little.
68	75	I wouldn't mind it at all.
1	1	Missing data

TABLE 4-2
(continued)

SOCIAL DISTANCE (continued)

*"If a family of a different race (but same level of education and income) moved next door to you, how would you feel about it?"

9	7	I'd mind it a lot.
28	23	I'd mind it a little.
62	69	I wouldn't mind it at all.
1	1	Missing data

*"If you have small children later on, would you rather they had only White friends, only Negro friends, or both?"

16	13	I'd like them to have only White friends.
4	3	I'd like them to have only Negro friends.
79	82	I'd like them to have both White and Negro friends.
1	1	Missing data

PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION

*"Do you think that very many Negroes miss out on jobs and promotions because of racial discrimination?"

39	39	Many.
41	42	Some.
16	13	Only a few.
3	5	None at all.
1	1	Missing data

*"Do you think that many Negroes miss out on good housing because White owners will not rent or sell to them?"

40	40	Many.
41	43	Some.
14	13	Only a few.
3	2	None at all.
1	1	Missing data

*"Do you think that many Negroes miss out on good schooling because of racial discrimination?"

26	31	Many.
43	41	Some.
20	20	Only a few.
10	8	None at all.
1	1	Missing data

*Item was reversed in construction of index.

**Numbers in the lefthand column (italics) indicate percentage frequencies in spring 1969 (Time 3); numbers in the righthand column indicate percentage frequencies in spring 1970 (Time 4).

good housing, jobs, and schooling because of discrimination. Avoidance of close contact with other races is reflected in a high score on the index, Social Distance.

The questions in Table 4-2 were adapted from other studies conducted in the Survey Research Center. In particular, the items were included because we were interested in exploring the following relationship reported by Campbell and Schuman (1968, p. 35):

> Among [white] people over 40 years of age, those with higher levels of education are no more or less likely to support an open housing law or to express lack of concern at having a Negro family next door than people of lower educational attainment. The picture is quite different among people age 20 through 39. Here we see that the attitudes expressed by young people whose formal education has not gone beyond high school do not differ from older people of similar educational level. But those who have gone on to college differ substantially both from less educated people of their own generation and from college-educated people of the older generation. More of them believe that there should be a law guaranteeing open housing and more of them say they are not at all disturbed at the prospect of a Negro neighbor.

Two alternative explanations for the relationship summarized above can be distinguished. One explanation is that college is somehow producing the change in racial attitudes. Campbell and Schuman present that interpretation in the following terms (1968, p. 35):

> Since World War II those white students who have gone on to college have evidently been exposed to influences which have moved their attitudes away from the traditional pattern in the directions we have observed. We cannot say whether this resulted from specific instruction regarding questions of race or from a general atmosphere of opinion in the college community but it is clear that a sizeable proportion

> of these postwar generation college students were affected. In contrast, the high schools which our respondents attended during the postwar years seem to have been little more involved in the nation's racial problems than they were in the prewar period.

The alternative explanation for the more liberal racial attitudes among the college educated can be stated this way: those individuals who are less discriminatory and more supportive of civil rights are also more likely to go to college. To state the same explanation as a testable proposition: college-bound individuals will show different racial attitudes before they actually enter college.

The cross-sectional survey design used by Campbell and Schuman did not permit any comparison of these alternative explanations, but the longitudinal design of the Youth in Transition study does. It requires a comparison of the 1969 data collected just prior to high school graduation (for most), and the 1970 data collected after the first year of college. We found it useful to compare three levels of educational attainment: high school dropouts, those who graduated from high school but did not continue their education, and those who spent the year 1969-70 in post-high school education (college or university in nearly all cases). It seemed appropriate to follow the practice of Campbell and Schuman and limit these analyses to white respondents.

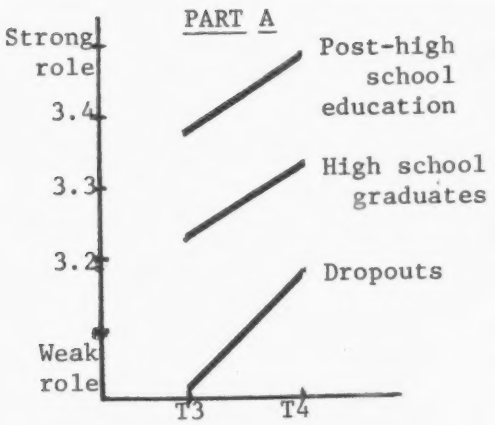
The results for the three indexes are summarized in Figure 4-1. They indicate that racial attitudes among

high school students may be changing before graduation and that college-bound students already have different racial attitudes. Support for government action to insure equal rights showed a slight increase between 1969 and 1970 for all three educational subgroups (Part A). The results also show that college students were most supportive of government action both before and after they entered college, and dropouts were least supportive. The differences among educational subgroups in perceptions of discrimination are shown in Part B. College-bound students perceived more discrimination than others at the time they graduated (1969), and their perceptions of discrimination increased during their first year of college. High school graduates who did not go on to college started out (in 1969) perceiving a bit less discrimination than those bound for college, and a year later their perceptions of discrimination had dropped very slightly. The dropouts had the lowest perceptions of discrimination in 1969, and they perceived still less a year later. The results also show that college students were most willing to have personal contacts with blacks, and dropouts were least willing (Part C)--a pattern similar to that shown for government role. Overall, the willingness to have personal contacts with blacks increased from 1969 to 1970; however, the change on the part of non-college high school graduates was very slight.

Figure 4-2 compares one of the findings reported by Campbell and Schuman (1968) with data from the Youth in Transition study. The results suggest that attitudes about a Negro family moving next door are not very different between our sample of college students and the college-educated

Figure 4-1

RACE ATTITUDES



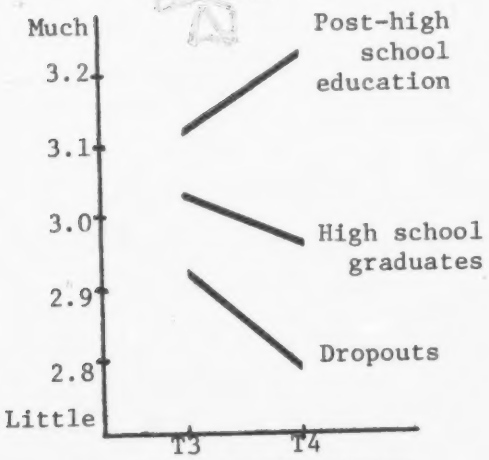
STRONG GOVERNMENT ROLE

(Approximate standard deviation, both times = .64)

WHITES ONLY

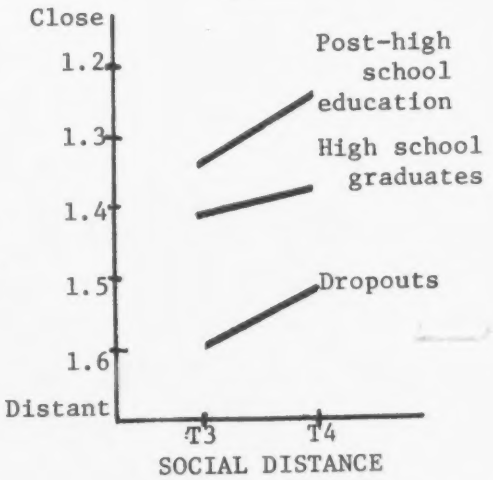
Spring, 1969 (Time 3)--
Senior year of high school

Summer, 1970 (Time 4)--
one year later



PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST NEGROES

(Approximate standard deviation, both times = .72)



SOCIAL DISTANCE

(Approximate standard deviation, both times = .55)

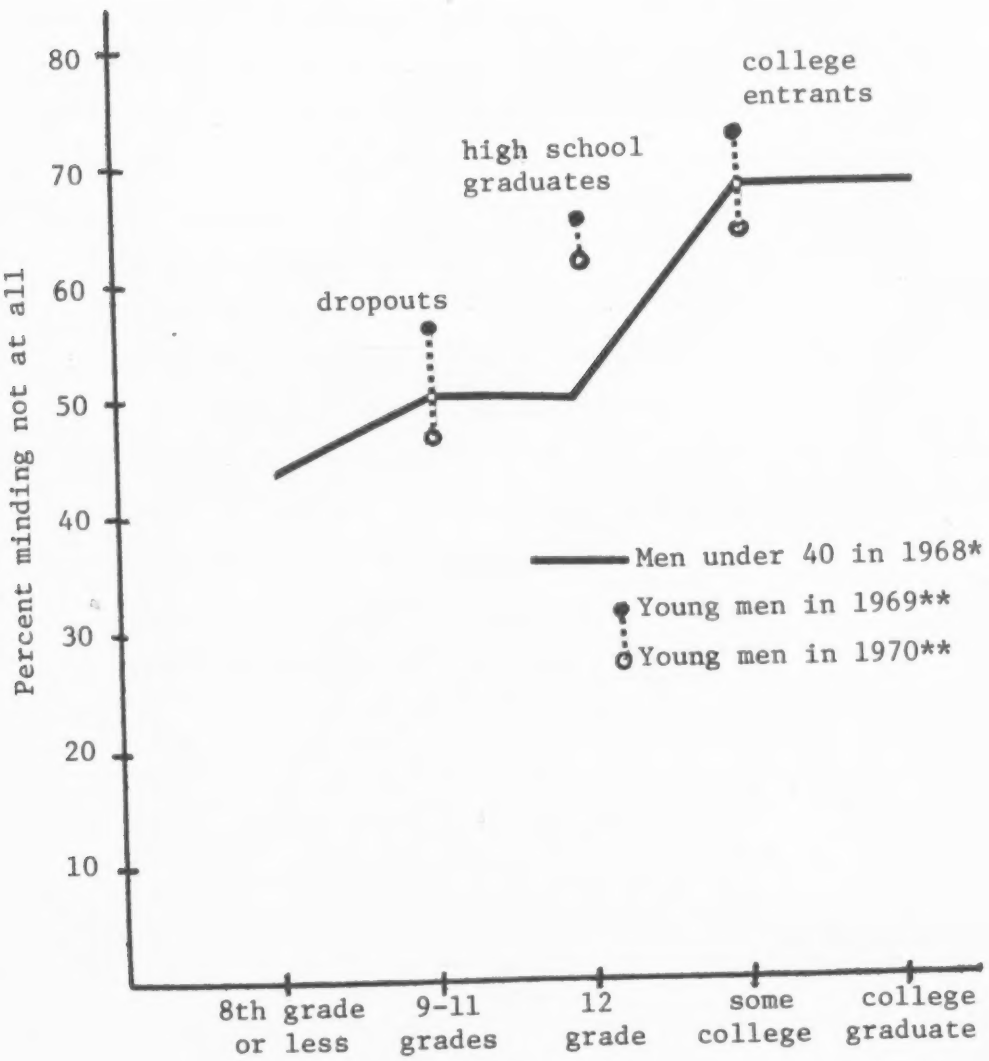
respondents under age 40 in the Campbell and Schuman study. Such interpretations must be made with caution, since the two studies differ in sample and method. (The Campbell and Schuman study used interviews and a sample concentrated in 15 major American cities in 1968; the Youth in Transition sample is a national cross-section, and the racial attitude items were part of the paper-and-pencil questionnaires in 1969 and 1970.) Nevertheless, there is sufficient similarity in findings for the college-educated groups in the two studies to warrant some further observations. The dropouts in our study gave responses roughly comparable to the high school-educated group in the Campbell and Schuman study. The high school graduates, on the other hand, were perhaps closer to the Campbell and Schuman college-educated group. The findings are more provocative than conclusive, but they suggest the possibility that racial attitudes are finally beginning to change in the high schools as well as in colleges.

It is also possible that racial attitudes in high school change *more* among those who are college-bound, for by the time they were approaching graduation some modest differences in racial attitudes existed between those in our sample who would and would not go on to college. Findings from two other studies support this explanation. The Ohio study of high school students found that, "College preparatory students are 10 percent higher on all acceptance questions about those of various races and religions than are those enrolled in other curricula" (Bryant, 1970, p. 7). The Purdue study found those students planning on entering college more aware of discrimination in schools, and more willing to work closely in school with students of different

Figure 4-2

RACIAL ATTITUDES AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS AMONG WHITE MEN

"If a Negro family with about the same income and education as you moved next door to you, would you mind it a lot, a little, or not at all?"



*From the Campbell and Schuman study of racial attitudes in fifteen cities (1968, p.35).

**From the Youth in Transition study.

races. Data from the Purdue study also indicate an increased awareness of and concern about racial discrimination as students progress from tenth grade to twelfth grade (Erlick, 1970).

In summary, we find that there are differences in racial attitudes between those who entered college, those who graduated from high school but did not continue their education, and those who dropped out of school. A portion of these differences appeared during the first year of college for some of our respondents, but another portion was already there by the time they graduated from high school. Of course, the effects of higher education on racial attitudes may show up most clearly only after three or four years of college, rather than just one. Thus we cannot draw a firm conclusion about how much of the "college effect" was already in existence by the end of high school. Nevertheless, the data presented here do provide some support for the view that high schools have recently become more involved in the nation's racial problems.

CHAPTER 5

CRIME, VIOLENCE, AND PUBLIC ORDER

Crime and violence have increasingly been on the mind of the nation, receiving the attention of the media, national leaders, and the general public alike. As Chapter 1 noted, young men are also quite concerned about this issue. Eleven percent mentioned campus disorders specifically as a national problem (see Figure 1-3). Also 70 percent rated crime and violence as extremely or very important from a list of selected national problems--the second highest ranking (Figure 1-4). We also found that of the solutions volunteered by our respondents for crime and violence, almost 50 percent implied a need for more government activity.

We asked these young men to suggest solutions to crime and violence as a national problem. Table 5-1 presents the responses to the question "Do you have any ideas as to what should be done about this problem--by government, schools, or anyone else?"

Harsher penalties and enforcements are mentioned first by 34 percent of our respondents as a necessary solution to this problem. The majority of these young men suggest that harsher laws and penalties be passed and that present laws be more strictly enforced. Considering all three mentions, 6 percent recommend giving the police more authority and

latitude; "Stop handcuffing the police," or "We have to start *really* enforcing the laws." The remaining categories not specifically presented include comments as, "Send them all to Vietnam. That'll do them some good." "Curfews should be instituted." "Go after the Mafia." "Be tough on demonstrators." (We will return shortly to these latter comments concerning demonstrators.)

Changes in police activities are the first mentioned suggestions of 14 percent of our respondents. Six percent specifically recommend an increase in the number of policemen and 3 percent called for an improvement in the selection and training of police. These latter solutions included not only riot training, but also screening out sadistic applicants and training in police-community relations. The miscellaneous responses in this general area include improved pay and working conditions; improvements in police equipment, including the use of computers; and more cooperation between police and community.

Changes in the legal system account for more than 5 percent of the suggested solutions. Increased efforts to rehabilitate criminals and to improve the penal system are mentioned by 4 percent of the respondents. Some recommended that courts be more harsh, while others proposed a faster and less tedious judicial system. Some suggested legislation of morals (including repression of pornography and prostitution), while others felt we should avoid legislating morals. A very few felt that not enough criminals were being sentenced to capital punishment.

Thirteen percent of the young men's first suggestions dealt with the root causes of crime and violence. Eight

TABLE 5-1

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS TO CRIME AND VIOLENCE

	Mentioned Solutions			
	1st	2nd	3rd	Totals
Harsher penalties and enforcement of laws	34.0	9.5	1.4	-
Stronger penalties, harsher laws	13.0	3.3	.5	16.8
Stricter enforcement of laws	11.6	3.2	.3	15.1
Give police more authority, latitude	4.0	1.3	.3	5.6
General statement: toughness needed	3.0	.6	-	3.6
Changes in police	14.2	5.3	.6	-
Increase the number of policemen	5.7	1.3	.6	7.0
Improve the selection and training	2.8	1.5	.3	4.5
Other vague improvements in police functioning	3.3	.9	.2	4.4
Changes in courts and penal system	5.4	1.9	.5	-
Rehabilitate criminals, improve penal system	2.3	1.0	.2	3.5
Attacking root problems	13.2	5.8	1.3	-
Education	5.0	2.3	.6	7.9
Individual level solutions: "People have to...," or "Parents should...."	3.3	.9	.4	4.6
Vague: "Do something."	3.3	.5	.1	3.9
Other, not coded above	7.1			
Don't know	14.6			
Missing data	4.8			

Note: The total percentages are presented for each major category, then categories which received first mentions by over 2 percent of our respondents. We have broken down totals per category into first, second, and third mentioned solutions within a particular subarea. For example, some of the 10 percent whose second-mentioned solution called for harsher enforcement and laws may also be included among the 34 percent whose first-mentioned solution was also in that same general area. Therefore, our discussion considers only first mentions or those totals across individual solutions. Individual solutions receiving less than 2 percent of the first mentioned responses are not reported separately, but they do contribute to the overall total for the appropriate major category.

percent specifically referred to changes in education of adults and young people. Job training at the high school level and for interested adults was also mentioned. Some expressed the opinion that the schools should be teaching more about right and wrong. Most of the remaining respondents under this heading referred to economic changes, including better jobs, and general statements about abolishing slums, improving housing, and getting rid of poverty. Only a few mentioned improved race relations as a solution to crime and violence. Evidently, the majority do not see crime and violence as primarily a racial problem.

Individual-level solutions are offered by 5 percent of our sample: "It's up to the people," "People in the community have to get together," "Parents have to teach their children better," or "...be stricter with them."

Fifteen percent of the respondents could not think of any solution; another 3 percent said vaguely that "something should be done."

A number of young men mentioned campus disorders, student unrest, and riots as national problems. Their ideas for solving these problems are presented in Table 5-2. Repressive solutions, calling for harsher reactions from police, legislators, and college and university administrators represent the majority of the solutions suggested. Only 2 percent (of the total sample) gave such negative responses as, "Let them leave America if they don't like it." Another 2 percent support dissenters in statements such as, "Colleges and universities should be more responsive to students," and "The government should change policies causing protest." Conciliatory remarks, "The government and/or administrators should listen to students," are given by about 1 percent.

TABLE 5-2

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS
FOR CAMPUS DISORDERS, STUDENT UNREST, RIOTS

	Percent Mentioning
Repressive	
College and university administrators should be harsher	2
Police and National Guard should use more force	2
Stricter laws should be passed to stop rioters	4
Other anti-demonstrator responses	2
Conciliatory	
The government and administrators should listen to students	1
Support for dissenters	
College and universities should be more responsive to students	1
The government should change policies causing protests	1
Miscellaneous other solutions	
Specific	2
Vague	2

In the study of Ohio high school students similar negative attitudes toward demonstrators were found. Sixty-four percent specifically disagreed with student dissent over Cambodia; 70 percent felt that campus disturbances have served no useful purpose; and 58 percent agree that "college is a real privilege and those who demonstrate ought to be kicked out." Interestingly, no differences were found between those in college preparatory curriculum and those not in such programs (Bryant, 1970).

The attitudes toward crime, violence, and campus unrest described here are not radical or revolutionary. The young men in our sample feel quite strongly that those who disobey the law should be punished, and often punished harshly. It is difficult to discuss whether these young men recognize the causes of crime. A few mention narcotics, organized crime and poverty. But the wording of the question was such that solutions, and not causes, were solicited. Accordingly, to say that only 13 percent of the nation's young men are aware of the root causes of crime would certainly be an understatement.

The solutions offered here reflect a core of young men advocating a hard line on law-breakers. Quite a number, however, do recognize that steps beyond harsh laws and strict law enforcement are necessary. Increases in the number of policemen and the quality of their training and equipment were seen by many as important solutions. Attacks on the root causes were important to an equal number, although concrete solutions for attacking root problems were rare.

CHAPTER 6

POLLUTION

Pollution has increased in its importance as a national issue as the damage of our natural resources becomes more apparent, and as the mass media give increased emphasis to this problem. Almost 80 percent of our sample rated this issue "extremely" or "very" important. Less than 1 percent felt that pollution was not at all an important issue. As Figure 1-3 in Chapter 1 shows, concern expressed about pollution is higher than that for any other problem in our list of six. Additionally 47 percent of our respondents suggested solutions to pollution which stated or implied the need for more government activity.

Table 6-1 presents the solutions which the young men recommended for pollution. Thirty-nine percent gave first mention to harsher penalties and enforcement of laws as a solution. Twenty-six percent proposed that we "crack down on polluters," "fine them," or "close them down until they stop causing pollution." Specific mention of new and harsher legislation was made by 24 percent of our respondents. The *Life* poll of 15-21 year-olds found that 90 percent agreed that "There ought to be a law penalizing air and water polluters" (*Life*, 1971).

We note in passing that the percentage of respondents advocating harsh penalties and enforcement for violators is

TABLE 6-1

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS TO POLLUTION

	Mentioned Solutions 1st	2nd	3rd	Totals
Harsher penalties and enforcement of laws	39.0	11.2	1.7	-
Crack down on pollution, fine (gov't)	19.0	6.0	.8	25.8
New and harsher legislation	18.6	4.6	.8	24.0
Government support of pollution control	7.2	1.9	.6	-
Government support of devices, research	3.1	.9	.3	4.3
Vague proposal regarding government encouragement	2.4	.6	.2	3.2
Technical proposals	13.6	7.5	1.6	-
Alternatives to internal combustion-- other transportation proposals	5.4	4.2	.9	10.5
General: Need for new devices	6.1	2.8	.4	9.3
Industry action	6.6	3.2	.5	-
Industry should control pollution	4.6	2.5	.4	7.5
Educating public	3.7	3.6	.9	-
People must become aware of pollution	2.3	1.7	.5	4.5
Individual level solution	5.6	2.9	.7	-
General, "It's up to the people"	3.7	1.7	.3	5.7
Vague: "Something should be done."	4.2	.6	.1	4.9
Other, not coded above	5.1			
Don't know	10.2			
Missing data	4.7			

Note: The total percentages are presented for each major category, then categories which received first mentions by over 2 percent of our respondents. We have broken down totals per category into first, second, and third mentioned solutions within a particular subarea. Individual solutions receiving less than 2 percent of the first mentioned responses are not reported separately, but they do contribute to the overall total for the appropriate major category.

about the same whether we are asking about pollution or about crime and violence. It remains for future analyses to see whether the same group of individuals suggested harsh penalties and laws in both areas.

A more moderate approach to pollution was taken by the 7 percent who in their first solution suggested government support of pollution control. The most specific proposal in this category was for government-sponsored research and programs. A few (not in the table) recommended that government funds be used to clean up pollution.

Technical proposals were given by 14 percent of the respondents (in their first mention). Proposals specific to transportation problems, including alternatives to the internal combustion engine, were suggested by 11 percent of these young men. Nine percent mentioned the need for new devices and systems but were not more specific. A few respondents specifically mentioned improvements in waste and sewage treatment plants or an increase in their numbers.

Industry action (without specific mention of government prodding) was suggested by 7 percent of the respondents. Many of these simply stated that "Factories should control pollution."

A small number of respondents--only 4 percent on first mention--expressed the need for public education about pollution. Some felt that government, schools, and television should take the responsibility for getting this job done. The majority of those mentioning education, however, did not specify *how* people should come to recognize the problems presented by pollution, but merely stated that they must become aware of pollution and its effects.

As with solutions to crime and violence, a number of respondents (6 percent) mentioned first that individual actions must solve the problem of pollution. This included suggestions such as, "People shouldn't litter," "People shouldn't use so many paper products," or "Stop using throw away bottles." The bulk of the statements in this area were more general, "It's up to the people," "You have to get people to stop polluting."

In conclusion, we found that young men generally advocate a "hard line" on polluters and call for government support of pollution control and clean-up. A number made some technical proposals usually dealing specifically with automobiles. A small percentage mentioned the need for education about the problem.

CHAPTER 7

POPULATION GROWTH

The increasing concern about man's relationship to his natural environment includes the problem of population growth as well as pollution. The attitudes of young adults are of crucial importance in this area, since decisions they make (or fail to make) will have a direct bearing on the rate at which our population grows. Accordingly, our 1970 data collection included several interview and questionnaire segments that gave special attention to this and related issues.*

The first opportunity a respondent had to indicate his concern over population growth was in the open-ended question about problems facing the nation; a total of 9 percent included this as one of those problems (see Figure 1-3).

The young men had a second chance to express their concern about population growth in the question which asked about its importance as a national problem; 64 percent rated it "very" or "extremely" important.

The next question asked respondents to indicate what should be done about the problem--"by government, schools, or anyone else." The solutions offered by the respondents are summarized in Table 7-1. It is notable that 2 percent suggested that this is not a serious problem, 5 percent felt

*These segments were developed by Jerald Bachman, Terrence Davidson, Lloyd Johnston, Eugene Weiss, and Thomas Poffenberger.

that nothing more could be done, and 21 percent said they did not know or could not think of a solution to this problem.

Twenty-five percent advocated the encouragement of birth control and contraception. Of this group, 7 percent specifically mentioned schools as playing an important role through sex education and/or instruction in birth control. The government was also mentioned specifically by 5 percent as an agent which should encourage family planning, including making available birth control devices and supporting research on contraception.

Individual level solutions to overpopulation were mentioned by 16 percent. "People should stop having so many babies." "It's up to the individual couple to limit their family."

Specific government legislation to reduce population growth was mentioned by 14 percent of our respondents. Seven percent favored higher taxes or fines for those having over a certain number of children. Four percent were unsure as to the type of government action needed, but made vague comments that the government should so something about this problem.

Fourteen percent felt that educating people concerning the population problem is necessary. Most of this group--10 percent--did not specify where the responsibility for this education rested. Three percent specifically mentioned the schools, saying they should make their students aware of overpopulation.

Changes and improvements in present birth control methods were mentioned by 9 percent of the young men. Five

TABLE 7-1

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS
TO PROBLEMS OF POPULATION GROWTH

	Percent Mentioning*
Birth control, contraception must be encouraged	25
General statement--birth control should be encouraged, easily available	12
Schools should provide sex education, encouragement of birth control and/or instruction in contraception	7
Government should support and encourage birth control and family planning, including support of research	5
Specific government legislation to reduce overpopulation	14
Limit family size by legislation	7
Higher taxes or fines for having over a certain number of children	2
Vague, "Government should stop over-population."	4
Individual level solutions,	16
Includes comments such as, "It's up to the man and wife," "People have to practice birth control," etc.	
Education, about the problem	14
General reference to need for education	10
Schools should educate students about the problem, make them aware of it	3
Birth control changes	9
Legalize abortion, make it readily available, free, or inexpensive	5
More research, safer pill	2
Adaptation to overpopulation	5
Build more housing, school, [illegible]	1
Move people into underpopula[illegible]s	1
Nothing more can or should be d[illegible], or they're doing all they can now	5
Population explosion is not a serious problem	2
Don't know (first mention only)	21

*Totaled across multiple answers

percent mentioned legalizing abortion, making it free, inexpensive, or readily available. Another segment of this sub-group--2 percent--advocated more research in contraception, particularly development of a safer birth control pill.

Five percent mentioned adapting to the increasing population (as opposed to decreasing the rate of population growth). These solutions varied, but they included suggestions such as "Build more houses and schools," "Move people out into the country," "Build new cities," and "Make it so we can move people to the moon."

A number of young men were not alarmed about population growth or did not have any ideas as to a solution. A slightly smaller number felt birth control and contraceptives should be encouraged, but did not mention any government laws or regulations to deal with the problem.

The fact that only a small proportion of the respondents in the interview mentioned steps to be taken by government and schools should not be misunderstood. In a later *questionnaire* portion of the data collection, all respondents were asked to indicate their approval or disapproval of several potential actions by schools and government. An overwhelming majority favored high school courses dealing with sex and contraception, government efforts to make birth control information and contraceptives available to anyone wanting them, and government help for other countries to control their population.

Toward the end of the interview, a special series of questions asked respondents about their marital and family plans. Eight percent of the young men were already married

by spring 1970; 5 percent had at least one child, and the wives of another 2 percent were expecting a child. Eight percent of all the young men were engaged. When asked if they would get married in the next ten years, 68 percent said they would. This percentage does not include those who were married at the time of the interview, or who planned on definitely getting married sometime this coming year. Only 4 percent stated that they would never get married.

Since the bulk of these young men did intend to get married, it was of interest to know their family plans. Table 7-2 presents three questions from the interview asking how much consideration our respondents had given to the size of their future families. As responses to the first question show, only 14 percent had not thought at all about future fatherhood. The 7 percent missing data primarily represents those respondents who already had children or whose wives were pregnant. While 80 percent had thought about this question, a majority of young men had not discussed this subject with anyone--only 35 percent had done so. Twenty-one percent of our respondents had talked with their girlfriends or fiancees about the subject, 7 percent with friends. The 4 percent who had discussed this with their wives are those who did not have any children and were not expecting at the time. A total of 7 percent had discussed this with their parents, usually mothers.

Table 7-3 summarizes two interview questions: "What is the largest number of children you would choose to have?" and "What is the smallest number of children you

TABLE 7-2

CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO FAMILY SIZE

"Have you thought at all about whether you'd like to have children...?"

percentage	
32	Thought a lot
48	Thought a little
14	Not thought at all
7	Missing data (respondents with children or with expecting wife, generally)

"Have you talked with anyone about how many children to have?"

percentage	
35	Yes
59	No
6	Missing data (respondents with children or with expecting wife, generally)

→ "Who have you talked to...?"

percentage*	
22	girl friend, fiancee
7	friends
4	wife
7	parents, mother, father (total)
(3)	mother, specifically
(1)	father, specifically
1	brothers

*Totaled across multiple answers

would choose to have?" Most respondents--48 percent--said they would prefer to have at least two children. The typical reasons given to support this were, "It's important to have at least two," or "An only child is spoiled or lonely." Only 8 percent were willing to have no children at all. "You should have at least one," seemed to be the attitude of the 32 percent who wanted at least one child. As the "largest" column in Table 7-3 illustrates, most respondents felt they would not want more than four children. The reason most gave for the "largest" number of children they might wish to have was, "That's all I could afford." But other comments given in this section of the interview affirm the social norm that "Larger families are happier" and "Children are fun for parents."

TABLE 7-3

LARGEST AND SMALLEST NUMBERS OF CHILDREN

"What is the largest (smallest) number of children you would choose to have?" (two separate questions)

Number of children	Percentage	
	Largest	Smallest
0	2	8
1	2	32
2	21	48
3	24	6
4	24	1
5	12	-
6	6	-
7	1	-
8 and more	4	-
missing data	5	5

We also asked the young men what they thought the ideal number of children would be and Table 7-4 presents these figures. The highest percentage--41 percent--of our respondents favored having two children, but the distribution of answers is skewed toward greater numbers of children. Forty-nine percent favored more than 2 children. Percentages obtained from the Purdue study of high school students (Erlick, 1970) and the Harris study of young people 15-21 years old (*Life*, 1971) are also shown in Table 7-4. Both of the other studies seem to have data roughly similar to ours; sample differences and different rates of missing data are most likely responsible for the lack of complete correspondence. The second question in Table 7-4 deals with how many boys and how many girls our respondents wanted ideally. A slight bias toward boys is apparent; 59 percent of the respondents wanted only one girl, 41 percent wanted one boy and 40 percent wanted two boys.

After respondents indicated the ideal number of children they would like to have, they were asked what possible advantages and disadvantages were associated with the number they chose. Under the heading of advantages, 29 percent said that the number they chose represented what they would be able to afford; 20 percent felt that "the more children you have, the happier the family is"; and about 23 percent mentioned perceived advantages of small families such as better child-rearing practices and more love for each child, less work and worry for parents, and population control. The only appreciable mention of disadvantages involved economic considerations; 17 percent

TABLE 7-4

IDEAL NUMBERS OF CHILDREN

"All things considered, if you could have exactly the number of children you want, what number would that be?"

Number of children	Percentage YIT*	Harris**	Purdue***
0	2	58	0
1	3		
2	42		32
3	25	21	
4	17		29
5	4	17	
6	2		
7	-		11
8 and more	1		
missing data	6		26

"How many boys?" and "How many girls?"

Number of children	Percentage Boys	Girls
0	2	8
1	41	59
2	40	20
3	6	3
4	2	-
5	-	1
missing data	8	8

*Youth in Transition respondents, spring 1970

**Harris poll, late 1970 (*Life*, 1971)

***Purdue poll of high school students, June 1970 (Erlick, 1970)

felt that their ideal family size might be more than they would be able to afford.

It is noteworthy that the great majority of those asked saw no disadvantage at all in the number of children they considered ideal. When we combine this with the data in Table 7-4 indicating that 25 percent considered three children ideal and 24 percent preferred four or more, we begin to see the scope of the educational effort required if young people in the United States are to be made aware of their own role in controlling population growth. However, an encouraging feature in the data is the fact that all but 7 percent state that a family size of two children or less is within their range of acceptance (i.e., the smallest number they would consider having).

A number of the population issues treated in the personal interview were raised again in the paper-and-pencil questionnaire. Several questions dealt with the size and growth rate of population in the world and in the United States. These questions had correct answers, of course; the percentage answering correctly ranged from 22 to 42 percent, depending on the item. For those who were not accurate, however, the direction of error is very revealing. Thirty-eight percent overestimated the present population of the United States, while half that many underestimated it. Over three-quarters of the respondents overestimated the speed with which the population of the United States will double (at the present rate of increase). Fifty-six percent overestimated the size of the world population, and 42 percent overestimated the speed of world population doubling. When asked about the ideal

population size for the United States, 45 percent wanted it to remain about the present size, 44 percent preferred it somewhat or much smaller than present size, and only 12 percent wanted it larger. The preferences for world population were even more strongly against further growth; 67 percent preferred to have it smaller, 24 percent the same, and only 9 percent wanted it larger. In short there seemed to be little tendency to underestimate the problem in answers on a "test" of information and attitudes; on the contrary, the tendency was to exaggerate population size and growth rate.

These young men seemed to have some recognition of the problems presented by exploding population, but they appeared unable to tie such problems to their own thoughts about family size. It is as if the population problem were an abstract intellectual one, far removed from thoughts about the number of children one would personally choose to have. That explanation is certainly consistent with the interview data indicating that a majority of these nineteen-year-olds had given little or no thought to the size of family they might have.

It was anticipated that some respondents would not readily consider the link between their own family size preferences and the growth of population; accordingly, a number of questionnaire items were included to make the connection specific and unavoidable. Table 7-5 presents these items and responses. Seventy-two percent expressed some willingness to use contraceptives to prevent having children, while 21 percent personally considered contraceptives to be immoral. More directly relevant to the question of population growth are the remaining questions in the

TABLE 7-5

ATTITUDES ABOUT CONTRACEPTION
AND POPULATION CONTROL

	Agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Disagree
I personally would be willing to use contraceptives to prevent having children.	44	28	16	13
I personally consider most methods of birth control to be immoral.	7	14	33	46
A couple should have as many children as they want, without worrying about increasing population.	20	23	32	25
To prevent overpopulation, each couple has a responsibility to limit the number of children they have.	41	31	16	12
I feel strongly enough about preventing overpopulation that I'd be willing to limit my family to two children.	40	24	19	17

table. Forty-three percent checked agreement with the statement, "A couple should have as many children as they want, without worrying about increasing population." On the other hand, fully 72 percent agreed with the statement, "To prevent overpopulation, each couple has a responsibility to limit the number of children they have."

Clearly, the above two questions are diametrical opposites; thus it is a bit disconcerting to find some young men (at least 15 percent) agreeing with both. The problem is that some respondents have a general tendency to agree with a statement if it "sounds good," and this distorts our responses in the direction of overstating agreement. This serves as a useful reminder that we must be cautious about any very literal interpretations of percentage responses to questionnaire items; they are most useful as general indicators of direction, not as precise estimates.

Keeping the above caution in mind, let us consider the last question in the table; 64 percent agreed (or mostly agreed) with the statement, "I feel strongly enough about preventing overpopulation that I'd be willing to limit my family to two children." In spite of the inconsistencies, each of the last three questions had a majority lined up on the side of personal responsibility to help limit population growth. This commitment to limiting family size to two children comes as a bit of a surprise, given the interview data summarized above. Nevertheless, a new dedication to family limitation may have been genuine in at least some cases, for it seems likely that some young men gave more concentrated thought to the matter during the course of the interview and questionnaire than they had throughout the rest of their lifetimes.

Given the family size preferences expressed in the interview, plus some endorsement of the two-child family as a means of curbing population increase, it is of interest to see whether our respondents knew enough about sex and contraception to keep their families as small as they preferred. Table 7-6 presents some relevant data, the answers to a short quiz designed to measure knowledge of technical terms for reproductive organs and contraceptive methods. A number of words were given and the young men were asked to identify them as (a) a birth control method used by men, (b) a birth control method by women, (c) a part of the male anatomy, (d) a part of the female anatomy, or (e) none of the above. The column on the right side of the table shows the percent of respondents who gave the correct answer. Eighty-six percent placed "vagina" in the correct category. "Amoeba" was next often identified correctly. "Fallopian tube" and "scrotum" were also identified correctly by over 60 percent of the respondents. Only 5 items out of the 11 were correctly identified by more than half of our respondents, and some of these were surely guessing (see instructions in Table 7-6). Sexual terminology is not necessarily synonymous with sexual knowledge, of course, and effective contraception is dependent on more than knowing the right terminology. The question at the bottom of Table 7-6 indicates that only 40 percent know that a woman is most fertile 2 weeks after menstruation, and that surely is not a problem of terminology.

Table 7-7 presents several questionnaire items regarding sex education. Only 36 percent reported having a unit on sex education in high school; only 15 percent had studied

TABLE 7-6

SEX INFORMATION QUIZ

"The next several questions do have correct and incorrect answers. If you're not sure about your answers, we'd like you to guess."

	A birth control method used by men	A birth control method used by women	A part of the male anatomy	A part of the female anatomy	None of the above	Percent correct*
A vagina is.	2	5	4	86	3	86
An amoeba is	2	7	8	15	67	67
A fallopian tube is.	4	12	10	64	9	64
A scrotum is	7	9	61	11	11	61
An I.U.D. or "loop" is	9	52	6	12	21	52
A cervix is.	6	18	12	51	12	51
A seminal vesicle is	7	7	49	21	16	49
A stamen is.	5	5	33	10	46	46
A condom is.	.37	17	12	15	18	37
A tubectomy is	.15	22	15	10	38	22
A vasectomy is	.19	23	12	18	27	19

When is a woman most likely to become pregnant?

11% When she is menstruating ("having her period")

40% About two weeks after menstruation begins

26% About three days before menstruation begins

24% About three days after menstruation ends

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*Calculation of percentages excludes missing data cases.

birth control methods. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the vast majority of our respondents who did not take these courses wished that they had. The last two questions in this section dealt with sex information from parents. Thirty-eight percent had received sex information, and most of them felt it was "very" to "somewhat" worthwhile. Forty-two percent indicated that they did not receive sex education from their parents and wished they had; 20 percent did not receive such information from their parents and indicated that they were glad they didn't. Incidentally, this latter figure is significantly higher than the percentage who were glad they had not received sex education or birth control information in high school. In future analyses we will discover whether those who received various forms of sex education did better on the sex knowledge test summarized above.

The results summarized above represent a challenge to educators. The young men in our sample, most of them one year out of high school and many of them ending their first year of college, had very limited knowledge of population size, rates of population growth, and methods of contraception. Most had no sex education in high school and most regretted that fact. Those who had taken courses were often rather lukewarm about them; they rated them "somewhat worthwhile" more often than "very worthwhile." Apparently very few saw a clear connection between the population explosion and their own family size plans, at least not until a few questionnaire items forced them to do so. The challenge to educators was stated well by Burleson in his memorandum:

TABLE 7-7

SEX EDUCATION

"Did you have a unit on sex education when you were in high school?"

- 36% Yes
- 58% No, and I wish I had
- 6% No, and I'm glad I didn't

→"How worthwhile was it?"

- 13% Very worthwhile
- 18% Somewhat worthwhile
- 5% Not worthwhile at all

"Did you ever study about birth control methods in high school?"

- 15% Yes
- 76% No, and I wish I had
- 9% No, and I'm glad I didn't

→"How worthwhile was it?"

- 7% Very worthwhile
- 7% Somewhat worthwhile
- 1% Not worthwhile at all

"During your teenage years, did you get sex information from your parents?"

- 38% Yes
- 42% No, and I wish I had
- 20% No, and I'm glad I didn't

→"How worthwhile was it?"

- 15% Very worthwhile
- 19% Somewhat worthwhile
- 3% Not worthwhile at all

> Educators have a new task and few of them are responding to it in any way adequate to the size of the problem. Life in the twentieth century is becoming more and more a race between numbers and a quality of life. Now and for the foreseeable future--insofar as demographic extrapolations provide us an insight on population problems for the remainder of this century--participants and those about to become participants in this vital revolution require an education that includes a consideration of population problems (Burleson, 1970).

Hauser put it more bluntly some nine years ago:

> It is about time for twentieth century school curricula to incorporate twentieth century demographic findings in the context of their twentieth century implications (Hauser, 1962).

CHAPTER 8

OTHER NATIONAL ISSUES

This chapter presents brief discussions of three additional national problem areas. Two of these areas, hunger-poverty and the threat of nuclear war, are among the six specifically presented in the interview (see Figure 1-2). An additional area, national economic problems, was mentioned by a sufficiently large proportion of respondents to deserve some further discussion here.

Hunger and Poverty

Hunger and poverty were mentioned by 11 percent of the respondents in their listing of national problems. When asked to rate the importance of this problem area, 63 percent rated hunger and poverty as an "extremely" or "very" important issue. Twenty-seven percent of the solutions offered by the respondents called for more government activity (see Figure 1-5).

The solutions to hunger and poverty are varied, as indicated in Table 8-1. Provision of direct aid to the poor in the form of food, jobs, money and education are suggested. "Give more money to the poor." "Education is the answer." The suggested sources of such aid, when specified, included the government, business, and private individuals. Many who mentioned food spoke of changing

TABLE 8-1

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR HUNGER AND POVERTY

	Percent Mentioning*
Direct aid to poor	
Provide food, cut out farm production restrictions, use surplus food	13
Find jobs for poor people, employ needy people	11
Provide money, lower taxes of poor, keep or increase welfare	7
Provide or improve education of the poor	8
Revise the welfare system	4
Revision in government emphasis	
Feed or help people here or instead of those overseas	10
Spend less on space, more on domestic problems	5
Spend less on Vietnam, Indochina, more on domestic problems	4
Spend less on military, more on domestic problems	3
Other changes in national priorities	3
Vague statement: "Government shouldn't let people starve."	12
People should be made to work, reduce or get rid of welfare	8
Vague negative comments, "People don't have to be poor if they don't want to."	5
Stop population growth so there's more food	4
Other, not coded above	13
Vague: "Something should be done." "People shouldn't starve."	3
Don't know (first mention only)	18

*Totals across multiple answers

agricultural restrictions on land use and/or the use of surplus food; "They ought to stop paying farmers not to farm," "Distribute surplus food." Some called for revision of the welfare system.

A number of respondents seemed to have negative attitudes toward the poor and toward welfare. "People should be made to work." "Don't give money to women who keep having babies." A number of these comments were more vague and indirect, e.g., "Nobody has to be poor."

Quite a few viewed the problem as one of government priorities; they objected to high expenditures on Vietnam, the military, and the space program; they expressed the view that we should be doing more about dealing with hunger, poverty, and other domestic problems. "We shouldn't spend money going to the moon when people are starving." "Get out of Vietnam; then we can take care of the poor."

Four percent felt that population growth was responsible for hunger and poverty. "Cut down on population." "There are too many people." "Everybody's going to starve if we don't stop overpopulation."

Vague responses, without solutions, were given by 3 percent; 18 percent had no opinion or ideas on how to solve the problem of hunger and poverty.

The National Economy

The economic state of the nation was not among the six problem areas that we chose to ask respondents about specifically; nevertheless, quite a few mentioned problems in this area when asked the open-ended question about

problems facing the nation. Table 8-2 presents these categories of economic problems; 14 percent mentioned inflation, 14 percent mentioned recession, and 3 percent mentioned unemployment.

TABLE 8-2

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

	Percent Mentioning*
Inflation, high prices, high cost of living	14
National economy, recession, depression, stock market	14
Unemployment	3
Other economic problems	2

*Total percentages across first, second, and third mentioned problems.

Only those individuals who specifically mentioned these problem areas were asked to suggest solutions, thus their answers cannot be taken as representative of what the total sample would have said. Their proposals are summarized in Table 8-3. The single most frequently mentioned proposal was a call for wage and price controls; this proposal was made by 8 percent of the respondents, but they represent fully one-quarter of all respondents who discussed national economic problems. Other suggestions, each mentioned by 2 percent of the respondents, called for more jobs, changes

in taxes, and spending less in Southeast Asia and more at home. Additional fairly specific solutions ranged from "People should stop asking for higher wages" to "The government should subsidize auto companies." Six percent gave vague solutions such as "Prices should go down" or "Make the dollar worth more."

TABLE 8-3

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS TO ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

	Percent Mentioning*
Government should introduce wage and price controls	8
Spend less on Vietnam, Indochina, and more on problems at home	2
More jobs	2
Changes in taxes	2
"Other" specific mention of solution to economic problems	4
Vague mention of solution to economic problems	6

*First mentions only; percentages based on total respondents, not just on those mentioning this as a problem.

The Threat of Nuclear War

In response to the open-ended question early in the interview, only 7 percent of the respondents mentioned war (including nuclear war), defense, or the establishment of peace among the major problems facing the nation. The one

important exception, of course, was the war in Vietnam, which was mentioned by 61 percent of all respondents. When asked specifically to rate the importance of the "chance of nuclear war," 17 percent rated it "extremely" important and 18 percent rated it "very" important--far lower importance ratings than were given to any other problem area we asked about. The attitude which seemed to be responsible for the low importance ascribed to nuclear war was well expressed in the following response, "I don't feel the nations will use it...No one is stupid enough to kill everyone."

The respondents' proposals for dealing with the chance of nuclear war are presented in Table 8-4. The percentage having no opinion or solution was higher for this national problem area than for any other discussed in the interview. Eight percent, including the young man quoted above, said they did not consider the threat of nuclear war a very serious problem. Another 9 percent said nothing more could (or should) be done. The idea that governments should get rid of nuclear weapons and/or agree not to use them was put forward by 19 percent of the respondents; 6 percent mentioned improved foreign relations, 5 percent urged negotiating treaties with other countries, and 5 percent made vague suggestions to "Make peace" or "Stop having wars." About 5 percent were "hard-liners" who called for strong arms, anti-ballistic missiles, bomb shelters, or civil defense measures; an example is the young man who urged that we "Install the ABM's all over the country."

The present generation of young men have strong concerns, and express growing opposition, when it comes to the war in Vietnam. The larger threat of nuclear war, however, does

TABLE 8-4

SUGGESTIONS FOR AVOIDING NUCLEAR WAR

	Percent Mentioning*
Don't know, no solution given	31
Don't think it's much of a problem or threat	8
Nothing more can (or should) be done	9
Get rid of nuclear weapons, agree not to use them, "ban the bomb"	19
Governments should talk more, improve foreign relations	6
Negotiate, sign treaties, with other countries	5
"Make peace," "Stop having wars"	5
Be armed, ready for attack, have anti-ballistic missiles, bomb shelters, etc.	5
Other, vague, uncodable	12

*First mentions only.

not alarm them nearly as much as may have been expected. Perhaps this is simply a contrast effect; Vietnam is a clear and present danger, especially for young men, whereas the danger of a nuclear holocaust is more abstract and remote. On the other hand, it may be the demise of the foreign policy of "brinkmanship" which is responsible for this feeling that nations can and will avoid the use of nuclear weapons. These young men have seen the bomb shelters come

and go; since 1961 (the time of the Cuban missile crisis) there has been a more-or-less steady movement away from nuclear threat and counter-threat. In short, the overall trend of experience for young men (in contrast to that of their parents) has been gradual reduction in emphasis on nuclear war.

Whatever the reasons may be, the dominant attitude among young men seems clearly to be that a stalemate has been reached. They feel that the major powers are sufficiently aware of the potential for total destruction in a nuclear war that they will not start one.

CHAPTER 9

WHAT YOUNG MEN FEEL THEY CAN DO

The sequence of interview questions described in Chapter 1 included one further item we have not yet discussed. After the young men in our sample discussed a number of national problems and indicated what "government, schools, or anyone else" could do about these problems, they were asked the following question directed at their own opportunities to deal with the problems: "Thinking over *all* these problems--the ones you mentioned and the ones listed on the card (see Figure 1-2 for the six problems listed on the card)--are there any of them you feel you yourself can do something about?" Table 9-1 presents the answers to this question.

Perhaps most striking is the fact that almost one-quarter of our respondents said there was nothing they could do about the major problems. The remainder gave most frequent mention to pollution and race relations as problems they could do something about--one-third of the respondents mentioned each of these areas. One-quarter of the young men said that they could do something about population growth. The remaining problems received much less frequent mention.

The specific individual actions suggested for pollution, race relations, and population growth are presented

TABLE 9-1

PROBLEM AREAS I CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT

	Percentage*
Pollution	34
Race relations	33
Population growth	24
Poverty, hunger	11
Crime, violence	11
Campus disorders	8
Vietnam	6
Nuclear war, war (generally)	2
Reference to all problems	5
No problems I, personally, can do anything about	23

*Totaled across multiple answers.

in Table 9-2. Personal solutions regarding pollution were predominantly general statements of "Don't litter," "Don't pollute." A number of respondents (8 percent) gave more specific answers, "Pick up litter," "Use lead free gasoline," and other automobile related statements. A few, aware of the complex technology necessary to solve the problem, felt they could study ecology and pollution. A number (3 percent) volunteered a willingness to organize or join groups to publicize pollution or to clean up. Influencing friends, others and the government was an action suggested by 8 percent.

TABLE 9-2

WHAT I CAN DO ABOUT THIS PROBLEM

	Percent Mentioning Solution*
Pollution (mentioned by 34%)	
Don't litter or pollute (general statement)	18.3
Pick up litter, "keep city clean"	4.3
Automobile related statements, usually vague	3.7
Study problem, including technology or ecology	1.6
Organize or join groups to make others aware of the problem or to clean up	3.0
Influence others, friends, talk to people	4.3
Influence government (write congressmen, vote)	4.3
Other direct specific action	2.3
Vague statement, no action implications	3.1
Race Relations (mentioned by 33%)	
Try to get along with those of other races, understand others, don't discriminate or be prejudiced	21.8
Get together with those of other races on a social basis	2.6
Join organizations to improve race relations or to support equal rights	.6
Influence opinions (family, friends, and generally)	7.4
Influence government (write congressmen, vote)	.4
Other direct specific action	1.1
Vague statement, no action implications	2.6
Population Growth (mentioned by 24%)	
Limit family (vague statement), learn or practice birth control	16.6
Only have one or two children	3.3
Not have any children	1.9
Join organization to encourage and inform on birth control	.4
Influence others (talk to people about it)	2.7
Influence government (write congressmen, vote)	.3
Other specific action	1.7
Vague statement, no action implications	1.7

*Totaled across multiple mentions of a solution.

Race relations was the area second most often mentioned as an issue the respondents felt they personally could help solve. General statements about "Getting along with others," "Don't start trouble," "Don't discriminate or be prejudiced," were given by 22 percent. Getting together socially with those of other races was mentioned by 3 percent. Seven percent mentioned influencing the opinions of family, friends, and others in general. Less than 1 percent mentioned influencing the government. This is consistent with the finding, reported in Chapter 3, that few of our respondents felt that increased government action is the solution to racial tension. Also less than 1 percent expressed interest in joining organizations to solve this problem. Race relations is obviously a problem which our respondents felt could best be solved on an individual level, and not by government edict or group pressure.

Personal solutions to population growth included 17 percent who made general statements such as "Limit my family" or "Practice birth control." Three percent stated definitely "having only one or two children" as an action they personally could do to help solve population growth. Two percent mentioned the intention of not having any children at all. Three percent were willing to influence opinions--a lower percentage than those willing to influence opinions on race relations. This reflects the feeling we noticed earlier that family size seems a more private and individual matter. Confirming this is the lack of any support for "influencing the government," or organized group action.

In sum, three problem areas are mentioned most frequently by young men as things they can do something about--pollution, race relations, and population growth. It is scarcely surprising to find these problems mentioned most often--but it is surprising to find that each one is mentioned by no more than one-third of the respondents. More surprising, and disconcerting, is the fact that almost one-quarter of the young men in our sample apparently felt that they could not make a personal contribution to solving any major national problem. Perhaps they were overwhelmed by the idea of a "national problem" and thought it a bit presumptious to say that their own efforts would really help solve any problem on a national scale. But the more troublesome possibility is the one suggested in the chapter on population growth--there may be a fundamental failure to perceive the link between individual actions and societal outcomes.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary source of data for this special report is a survey of young men conducted in the early summer of 1970. Additional information has been included from earlier surveys of the same respondents, from other surveys of youth, and from several surveys of adults. Occasionally we have found some differences between men and women, and between boys and girls; however, the similarities have been greater than the differences. Accordingly, we consider this a report about the views of youth, rather than young men only.

Summary of Major Findings

Young people in mid-1970 rated Vietnam as the number-one-problem facing the United States. When asked what to do about our involvement in Vietnam, a majority favored plans that would have removed all U. S. troops by the end of 1971. A series of questions asked first in 1969 and repeated in 1970 revealed that dissent over Vietnam policies had increased during the year; the increase occurred primarily among those who spent that year in higher education. This increase in dissent was not limited to young people, however. Gallup poll data reveal that adults during the same period became increasingly frustrated with the war and eager to get out.

A related problem mentioned by a number of respondents can be labelled "national unity" or the "morale of the nation." Data collected on four different occasions from 1966 to 1970 reveal a gradual increase in mistrust and cynicism about government. Surveys of adults in 1964 and 1970 reveal a parallel increase in mistrust; moreover, the overall level of mistrust and alienation seems higher among adults.

During roughly the same period, 1965 to 1969, a large shift in support for the eighteen-year-old vote occurred among young people. Among male high school seniors the level of support increased from 50 percent in 1965 to 80 percent in 1969 (and remained at the same level in 1970). Support for the eighteen-year-old vote was highest among those who strongly disagreed with U. S. policy in Vietnam. Young people, far from dropping out of the political process, apparently are eager for a larger role in it.

Frequently mentioned as a national problem was race relations. The impression gained from open-ended interview comments is that young men see this as a major national problem, but they do not feel that further government action is the solution. The most prominent suggestions involved individual good will. An examination of racial attitude scales showed differences related to educational aspirations and attainments. Among whites, high school dropouts were least willing to admit the existence of widespread racial discrimination, and most likely to exhibit discriminatory attitudes themselves; those who entered college were most aware of racial injustice, most supportive of government action to reverse such injustices, and least likely to

display discriminatory attitudes themselves. Changes in racial attitudes occurred during the first year of college, but some of the differences summarized above were apparent before high school graduation--those *planning* to go to college tend to have slightly more liberal views on race relations.

When asked about crime and violence, many young men in our sample seemed to favor firmer action by police and courts. Some recommended increased numbers of policemen, improvement in their training, and improved equipment. Some addressed themselves to the root causes of crime and violence; they suggested changes in education, more job training, more jobs, better housing, and the like.

Pollution was rated as extremely or very important by 79 percent of the respondents in our study. The solutions they proposed present an interesting parallel to those offered to deal with crime and violence. A large number mentioned stronger penalties and stricter enforcement of laws. As in the case of crime and violence, nearly half of the sample urged more government action in combatting pollution.

The young men in our study seemed a bit less aware of the problem posed by population growth, in contrast to their concern about pollution. Nevertheless, 64 percent rated the problem extremely or very important when they were asked about it. Proposed solutions to population growth most often were to encourage contraception. About one in ten suggested government action to legislate limits on family size or apply higher taxes to large families, etc.

It appeared that many respondents simply had not made the connection between their individual behavior and population growth. When asked what they could do personally about the problems under discussion, less than one in four said he could do something about population growth. When asked about the possible advantages and disadvantages of preferred family size, the only appreciable mention of disadvantages involved economic considerations--17 percent felt that their preferred family size might be larger than they could afford. Nevertheless, when their attention was drawn specifically to the link between personal family size and population growth, nearly two-thirds agreed or mostly agreed with the statement, "I feel strongly enough about preventing overpopulation that I'd be willing to limit my family to two children."

Of course, attitudes about population control and personal family planning are of limited importance without some rudimentary knowledge about contraception. A short quiz indicated that knowledge in this area is rather limited--at least when it comes to correctly identifying reproductive organs or birth control methods. A majority had never taken a class unit on sex education in high school, and most wished that they could have. An overwhelming majority of all respondents favored high school courses dealing with sex and contraception, and government efforts to make birth control information and contraceptives available to anyone wanting them.

When asked about the problem of hunger and poverty, many of the young men in our sample favored direct aid to the poor in the form of surplus food, revised welfare systems,

improved education, and help in finding jobs. Fifteen percent specifically called for changes in national priorities, citing Vietnam, the military, and space exploration as areas that should be de-emphasized in order to spend more on domestic problems.

When asked to rate the importance of the "chance of nuclear war," only 35 percent rated it extremely or very important--a far lower percentage than for any of the other problem areas rated. Many young men seemed to feel that a nuclear stalemate has been reached and that "no one is stupid enough to kill everyone." This relatively low concern about nuclear war contrasts sharply with the strong concerns and growing opposition focused on events in Southeast Asia; Vietnam is a clear and present danger, especially for young men, whereas the danger of a nuclear holocaust is apparently more abstract and remote.

Conclusions

A number of interpretations and conclusions have been offered throughout this special report. In this final section we will look at just two or three questions about the way youth look at society, and the way they are likely to fit into society.

Are young people ready to drop out of "the system"--or try to overthrow it? We can answer with a phrase borrowed from the recent *Life* (1971) poll of youth: "Change, yes. Revolution, no." Young people are dissatisfied with government in a number of ways, and their dissatisfaction has been growing in recent years. But we do not take this to be evidence for a generation gap, since adults are also

increasingly dissatisfied with government. As we said in Chapter 3, perhaps the greater differences between youth and adults lie in their willingness (and opportunities) to engage in activist demonstrations of their dissatisfactions, thus providing the illusion of a larger gap between the generations than in fact exists.

One bit of evidence indicating that most young people feel they should work within the present political structure is the increased support for the eighteen-year-old vote that occurred between 1965 and 1969. A change from 50 percent to 80 percent support among high school seniors in just four years represents a dramatic shift indeed. In the recent *Life* (1971) poll, only 3 percent indicated they would refuse to vote in the next election for which they were eligible. These findings certainly are not consistent with the view that large numbers of young people are dropping out of society.

Given the events of the late 1960's--the increased involvement in Vietnam and the assassinations of the Kennedys and Martin Luther King--it is scarcely surprising to find young people increasingly dissatisfied and concerned with national unity. What is perhaps most striking, as we noted in Chapter 3, is the fact that they are not *more* cynical and alienated. When their views are compared with those of adults, today's young people are not ready to give up on their country. They share with their elders an increasing impatience with government, but they have not dropped out. They want to have a part in shaping the nation's future--indeed, they may feel an increasingly desperate need to do so.

Now that recent legislation and court decisions have granted the franchise in national elections to those eighteen and older, youth have a new opportunity for involvement in national issues and problems. It thus becomes a matter of great interest to know what these new voters will be like.

Are young people very different from adults in their political views? They seem not to be, at least in terms of their political party affiliation or their stand on the central political issue of the Vietnam war. Their attitudes on Vietnam are a bit more "dovish" than those of adults, but the differences are not large. Moreover, it appears that both young people and adults are growing increasingly eager for disengagement in Southeast Asia, suggesting that in this area the view of youth today may be the position of adults tomorrow.

The political party preferences of young people are also not very different from those of adults, except that a larger proportion of young people are undecided or independent. Roughly 30 percent express a preference for the Democratic Party, while 20 percent prefer the Republican Party.

How well-prepared are young people to deal with major national problems? The answer to this question is mixed. On one hand, some of the interview responses we have seen clearly reflect articulate and well-informed opinions about national problems. But on the other hand, we found a number of young men who did not have opinions on important national issues, and obviously had not given them any serious thought.

It is discouraging to note that only about half of the high school seniors in 1969 could name one of the United

States Senators from their state, and only one-third could name both. This sort of finding, along with others mentioned in this report, suggests that much work remains to be done in educating young people for the responsibilities of citizenship. This is not meant to imply that the youth we have been studying are less well-informed than their parents--that may not be the case. But surely we could be doing a better job of educating our young citizens.

Perhaps the advent of the eighteen-year-old vote will provide an opportunity and an incentive for high schools to educate young people about national problems and their own responsibilities for dealing with them.

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